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Colwell, Stephen, 1800-1871
Politics for American
Christians


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POLITICS

FOR

AMERICAN CHRISTIANS:

A WORD

UPON

OUR EXAMPLE AS A NATION, OUR LABOUR,

OUR TRADE, ELECTIONS, EDUCATION,

AND

Congressional Legislation.

Stephen Colwell ✓

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PHILADELPHIA:  
LIPPINCOTT, GRAMBO & CO.

1852.



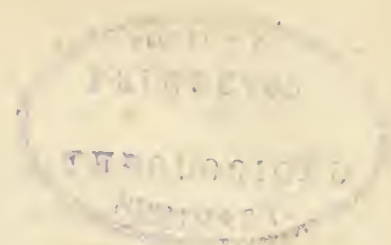
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## PREFACE.

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THERE is no small confusion of ideas among even intelligent men, and good Christians, on the subject of the bearing of Christianity on social and political questions. "Do you suppose I mingle my religion with my politics?" replied, not long since, a man of standing in his church, to a gentleman who had taken him to task for political conduct inconsistent with his religious profession. There are not a few who seem to be of the same opinion; that, in the way of politics and business, they can be perverse, rabid, undermining, overreaching, overbearing, if not dishonest and indecent, provided they keep their every-day conduct quite distinct from their religious observance and Sunday demeanor. Christianity permits no such distinction, — not even in the slightest degree. It is true that the great Author of Christianity, our Religious Lawgiver, Teacher, and Exemplar, enjoins no interference with political institutions. His instructions in reference to our conduct in this life are elementary; they reach to the soul and inward character, and thence mould the outward

man in all the phases, positions, and relations of external life. If the seeds of truth be in a man, as sown by Christ and His Apostles,—as planted by the Holy Spirit, then the trunk, and bark, and branches, the fruit, and foliage, must show the same character. A man cannot carry Christianity all on one shoulder, nor in one hand, nor concealed in his pocket. If it be in him, it will show itself wherever he goes, and in all that he does, if any moral consideration be involved. We are not commanded to reform nor to attack political institutions which may be unfriendly to the progress of Christianity; but we are commanded to reform ourselves. The more richly we are filled with that wisdom which is taught by Christ; the more this leaven is infused into a whole community, the fitter will its citizens be to reform their institutions, and the more patiently will they bear what is oppressive or inconvenient, until the time comes when the needful reform can be effected with the greatest safety and advantage. The instructions of Christ, then, bear upon the preservation and purifying of all that is good in our political institutions, by regenerating and enlightening the individual men who sustain and manage them; they bear upon every needful social reform which can, in any degree, promote individual comfort and general well-being. When any large proportion of the people in any nation are thoroughly Christianized, its po-

litical results will not be long in showing themselves in what may promote human advantage, here and hereafter. No Christian can rightfully separate his religion from his politics, from his business, his profession, or from his career in life, whatever it may be.

The following remarks are intended to illustrate this truth in reference to several subjects having a political or social bearing. If our public institutions are important to the interests of humanity throughout the world, as affording irrefutable proof of the capacity of men for self-government; if they are important specially to us for the unequalled advantages we enjoy under them; if they furnish the only home which Christianity may claim as peculiarly its own, because here alone Christian institutions are unshackled, then Christians here undergo responsibilities perhaps more serious than ever weighed upon Christians of any previous nation or age.

The topics we introduce are but loosely touched. We but converse upon the subjects, — Our Position in reference to Foreign Politics; The Rewards of Labor; The Relations of industry with Trade; Public Education, Elections, Legislation, Legislative Bodies, and, more especially, the Moral Position of our National Legislature. These are topics of vast moment. They need a large development. The time may not have arrived when any one man can

fully systematize what is proper to be inculcated upon Christians as to their political and social duties. If so, the subject should not be lost from sight; and men, instead of slumbering over it, should keep it ever under close consideration, until the collision of many minds, and the product of much thought, shall shed light enough to send the needed intelligence, from one focus, with full effect, throughout the whole household of the family of Christ. We know that very many minds are now anxiously turned in the direction here indicated. We trust this attention will not be withdrawn until a work is performed, the most needful of any that can occupy the Christian mind.

PHILADELPHIA, October, 1852.



## POLITICS

### FOR AMERICAN CHRISTIANS.

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FOR many years we have been gazing upon the eventful scenes which have transpired in Europe, and we have been listening with no less interest to what has been said there; we have been looking with startled expectation to the developments, moral, political, and religious, which are rapidly unfolding in that focus of civilization. We cannot but regard that battle-ground of the interests of humanity with the most intense earnestness! How much do we behold and hear to excite our hopes, our fears, our sympathies, if not our intervention! We cannot if we would, we should not if we could, be indifferent spectators of what is passing there. Whilst we cannot avoid seeing the external movements of the peoples of Europe, we cannot be blind to the equally certain facts, that these movements are caused by internal forces, moral and intellectual, exerting an energy and power never felt before from the same sources. The friend of humanity is called to consider and appreciate strange events, new and explosive powers not heretofore familiar to the world.

The horse is learning to know his own strength and his rider's weakness; the progress of the journey is interrupted, and the security of the master threatened by violent and powerful, but awkward and ill-directed, and often vicious efforts, to escape from the galling harness of darker ages. We look on the noble steed, and wonder that he can be held by such flimsy cords, but tremble to see them snap, — and give him a liberty to which he is all unused, and which in its first intoxication is more dangerous to himself than the tyranny of a master. The people of Europe are rapidly hastening to a change of their political institutions, or to modifications of them more in accordance with their true interests. But, ah! what preparation is needed for this new position and its attendant duties? Whence shall come the light and the wisdom under the guidance of which this preparation must be made, and its results enjoyed? Have we any ground of hope from the lessons of the past, that mere human wisdom can extricate the masses of Europe from their present condition and place them securely in their proper sphere of usefulness to themselves and to the world? Certainly none. The course of events for more than half a century demonstrates their utter incapacity to emancipate and govern themselves. They have not yet sufficient self-control: they have yet the abuses, the prejudices, the chains — the harness of a thousand years to cast off, before they can be fit to assume the position of self-government. And that is not all; it is not merely a negative preparation they need, they must be trained for a new position and new duties. But how can this be ever effected,

unless they are first emancipated? We reply the first step in this great change is to know that preparation is requisite for the change — preparation of mind and heart. If these subjects were calmly and fully discussed, as they may be under any form of government, good progress might be made towards permanent and radical reforms. Rulers are not the chief obstacle to discussions of those truths which most concern the interests of humanity. The most beneficial changes are those which would often give as great satisfaction to the sovereign as to the masses of his subjects. The first and greatest difficulty lies in this, that large classes of men are interested everywhere in preserving the existing order of things intact. All change in their estimation threatens some sacrifice of position, or power, or wealth, or influence, on their part. Those who possess such advantages cannot endure a discussion which brings them into question. They hold the patronage of society in their hands; and the literature of every country is apt to be moulded to gratify their taste. They exercise a negative influence on the progress of truth, by giving it no welcome, as well as a positive one, by frowning upon all attempts to unsettle existing notions of social order. Such is the power exercised by these favored classes in every country, that it is not only hard to resist their influence, but difficult for those who have been bred among them even to think in opposition to the prevailing current of ideas. Writers and thinkers circulate among the fortunate thousands, and become their dependants; they forget the millions, or cannot afford to serve them. This repressive influence is exerted

with greater or lesser effect in different countries, but is appreciable in all.

Whence is to come that high intelligence and pure virtue which can surmount all these barriers to the truth, and shed the needful light upon these topics of social happiness? Can it come from political economy? no; for that is a science of wealth, with its production and distribution, explicitly excluding all moral considerations. Can it come from political philosophy? no; for that is making no progress, and never can whilst it persists in constructing systems of government, without keeping in view the very object of human society, the welfare of the individuals associated. No balancing of the powers of a government, however nicely accomplished, can atone for neglecting to provide chiefly for the main object of national association. No limitation of powers, no restraints from abuse, can compensate for leaving out the real end to be attained. Thus far political philosophy has shown itself totally incapable of grappling with the real question it involves, and has therefore evolved nothing like a science. The actual progress in political science cannot be attributed to any speculative philosophy, but to the lessons of experience, and more than all, to the light of the Reformation. If that light had been permitted to shine with equal lustre and steadiness in every country of Europe; how different this day would be the condition of those nations! But great as are the obligations of the world to the reformation, has it performed its whole duty to man? Have Christians of the Reformation, and the ten generations who have lived since, comprehended the whole of the



obligations devolving upon them? Can it be safely assumed that those who have left out of the scope of their studies the whole range of questions which most concern the social interests of humanity, have discharged their duties to their fellow-men? Living under a moral law, exacting such strong regards for men and all their interests, they could not satisfy the demand of that law by any thing short of studying not only individual, but social interests; for the former are frequently only to be reached through the latter. The actual progress achieved in good government has been made under the light of Christianity, which reveals the true theory of human happiness in this world, as well as in the world to come. But the progress—how infinitely short of the lesson! Human welfare on this side of the grave, how far too little has it engaged the attention of believers! They have not realized that all the temporal, as well as all the eternal interests of men, belong to their responsibilities. No language can add to the weight or stringency of these requirements. Christians have not, in times past, acquitted themselves of their social duties: they have scarcely put forth a hand in that direction, and they are still derelict to these obligations. Christianity is now suffering deeply from this neglect, and is made to appear as if unequal to the emergency of the day. Let not Christians occasion such reproach; let them arouse to the labors which are awaiting them. They must not only do good, but study to do good; they must not only help those who are near, but study to help those afar off; they must bring not merely their goods, and the help of their hands, but the labor of



their minds to the service of those whom they are commanded to love as themselves.

It is not supposed that all can engage, with the same advantage to themselves and others, in this expansive work of befriending all the world, or whole nations, or masses of men; it is not every Christian clergyman or layman who can enter upon such comprehensive inquiries as those we have indicated, with success. "Having gifts differing according to the grace that is given," let every man fill his separate, as well as his joint mission in this life, by glorifying his Father in Heaven, and serving his brethren on earth as his mental and physical gifts may enable him. Only let it be distinctly understood and felt, that our duties to other men are similar to those which we owe to ourselves. If our chief duty is the love of God, our next is the love of men. The blended action of these graces makes the perfect Christian. We believe, then, that the whole problem of human destiny in this world, is fully committed to the consideration of Christians: it is one which commends itself to the conscience of every thoughtful man, and takes hold upon all true friends of the human race. Believing, as we do, however, that the light of Christianity must shine upon every investigation intended to explore the hidden path to human happiness, we think that such explorations can only be successful in the hands of Christians; and the time has certainly arrived when the research must commence. Christians must now survey the world, not merely with an eye to the eternal, but to the temporal interests of men; not merely to direct their steps heavenward, but to guide and comfort

them in their earthly pilgrimage. The latter, if not as important, is as incumbent on us as the former. Without remarking on the influence which such considerations should have upon the form and administration of our missions to men of the heathen world, for these, though exclusively designed for religious instruction, become, in practice, so modified, as to embrace works of mercy and humanity; we turn to those countries of Europe where the desire for amelioration is now so clearly visible. It is now essential to human welfare that the light of revelation be shed upon the subjects discussed there;—that the light of Christian wisdom, caution, and calmness, be infused into measures designed to secure a better condition for the European family.

None can better render them this service than those who have enjoyed the unrestrained advantage of Christian instruction, free from the complications of ancient political and religious systems. In European countries, Christianity has never developed its application and bearing upon social questions. So far from such development, it has itself been subject to modifications, restraints, and perversions, effectually restraining its legitimate influences and proper bearing. We shall not pause to inquire what responsibilities, in this respect, rest upon English Christians: it is enough for us to ascertain what we should do to acquit ourselves of those which devolve upon Christians of the United States. We have been, in not a few respects, the most favored people on earth; we are most deeply indebted to the Dispenser of all blessings; and, being the most prosperous brother in the family of nations, we owe, not only

the largest debt of thanks to the Author of all good, but the largest debt of love and good offices to less favored brethren of other lands. This lesson, inculcated by the very spirit of Christianity, should be deeply pondered, as intimately connected with the progress of true religion.

As mere politicians, we may refrain from addressing them; but, as Christians, can we refuse them the benefit of our knowledge and experience? We must not content ourselves with merely pointing their attention heavenwards; they are enduring hardships here, and now; they ask for sympathy and present aid, and we cannot discharge our duties by simply exhorting them to patience and submission. Shall our large experience in self-government, our free thoughts, and our intimate acquaintance with the word of God, afford them no lesson? They struggle to cast off their ancient forms of government; we can at least warn them, that success in this will be, as we have said above, of no avail without preparation; they must not merely be prepared with a substitute, but they must be prepared to administer that substitute. A political change cannot safely be made until a previous moral change is accomplished. Ours was a long preparation, which dates back to the Reformation. A far shorter period would suffice to prepare the people of Europe for greater equality of condition, and for a better lot in this world. It is not change in the frame-work of society, which they most need, in the first instance; it is to comprehend the nature and extent of their social interests. The rulers and people are alike deficient in this knowledge. These interests should be understood in the

light of men's mutual dependence, and their obligations to mutual support and kindness. There is a language of kindness and of wisdom which may be addressed to the rulers and people of any country; and it is in this tone we should speak, for we cannot forget the duty of Christians, to "be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates." Let it be known that, whilst Christians are ever zealous of promoting the advantage of their fellow men, they are never unmindful of the hazards of rash movements; that they are, in fact, earnest in promoting the real advantage of those in authority, as well as of those over whom sway is exercised. It is not merely a change in the form of a government which is desirable in the Christian aspect; if the social institutions within the sphere of government are what Christian example and morality should make them, then a very high degree of social well-being may be enjoyed under any form of rule.

All governments are more or less the subjects of abuse; the best is that which affords the fewest opportunities of abuse and oppression, and the fewest temptations to such indulgence. As the wisest form of government cannot secure the benefit of social happiness, unless with previous preparation or long training; it is to this training that the Christian philosopher must direct his eyes. The constitution of a country should take its form and spirit from the actual position into which their previous training has led the people. It is often safer, and frequently only possible that this preparation should proceed under existing political institutions, any attempts to change which, in the first instance



involves disaster and bloodshed, with the ruin of industry, and prolonged disturbance of the elements of peace and prosperity.

“Every religion, every mode of religious belief and opinion, is more or less directly related to the social moralities; and laws and institutions are the organs through which these express themselves—the body of which they are the soul. Every theory of Divine Providence and government draws after it, or rather includes in it, a corresponding theory of human destination; therefore of human duties; therefore of the civil and social arrangements under which the destination may best be attained, and the rights and duties most worthily realized; all which especially holds good of such a religion as the Christian’s—so practical, so human, so rich and full in its every-day moralities.”—“The Founder of Christianity and his first followers did not interfere with forms and modes of civil government otherwise than to teach that all governments which answer the common purposes of social union are equally legitimate and of divine right;—“for the powers that be, are ordained of God.” “They contented themselves with announcing broad and everlasting moral truths, destined in the progress of time, gradually to regenerate society and remould governments and politics into their own likeness.”—“Leaving then all questions of texts and textual controversy, as belonging rather to the theologian than the political moralist, we simply inquire what great general truths in the philosophy of social morals,—what ideas and principles having a political bearing, are consecrated by the general tone and tenor of the volume which



Christians revere as their rule of faith and practice? what moral may the politician learn from that vast fact in the economy of Providence, that stupendous spiritual revolution, whose opening scenes the books of the New Testament disclose?" "Thus Christianity consecrates the principle of appealing directly to the common people on the very highest and deepest questions of human interest. The gospels treat the popular intellect with respect and friendliness." "It honours all men by addressing itself to faculties and feelings which all men in common possess. That 'the poor have the gospel preached unto them' is adduced by our Lord as one of the most distinctive signs of his Divine Mission, and it is this more than any thing else which constitutes the Gospel a great fact,—the greatest of facts,—in the philosophy of the Rights of Man. This preaching of a gospel to the poor, assumes that the poor have faculties for the appreciation of the profoundest of moral truths; that there is nothing too good to be given to them; that the enlightening of their understanding, the awakening of their feelings, the guiding of their aspirations to spiritual beauty, truth and good, is a work worthy of the highest order of intelligence. The Christian religion is the loftiest wisdom descending, without any parade of condescension, to commune with the deepest ignorance,—lifting up its voice not merely in the schools of learning and science, but in the high-ways of human intercourse, in the very streets and market-places."

We have made this long extract from an article in *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* for December 1844, entitled "The Politics of the New Testament," for

its spirit and tone as well as because it contains some ideas in the line of our remarks.

Whilst we engage in every direct and appropriate means of extending the benefits of Christianity, we should neither overlook nor fail to apply all the indirect means of attaining this end.' The latter may be less obvious to common observers, but they are quite frequently the most effective. The preaching of the gospel is an appointed means for the conversion of the world, but a Christian exemplification indirectly conveys a more impressive lesson than the most eloquent enforcement of a doctrine. We must win the ear of our auditors if we would find the way to their hearts: we must establish a place in the confidence of men before they will surrender their convictions to our teachings. It is not necessary nor proper that we should tender the standards of our church to those we would befriend as the condition upon which they may receive our favor. It should be an admitted and proclaimed fact, that there is something in Christianity higher and purer than any exhibition yet made of it. Denominationalism, however unavoidable, is the result of human weakness, not of any imperfection or ambiguity in Christianity. Whenever it is in the power of Christians to rise above this weakness, and to exhibit the results of their faith in their loftiest aspects, they should not fail to do it as one of the most efficient means of extending the Redeemer's kingdom. When as Citizens of the United States, and as members of the family of Christ we look abroad upon the world, we are especially bound to rise above sectarian lines and to carry the eyes of our fellow Christians of every denomina-

tion with us, because it is only in our collective capacity we can employ that moral or physical power which can accomplish any great good among the nations of the earth. When we reflect that we are the only people in the world who enjoy full control over our religious and political institutions; that we have actually moulded and developed them to their present condition free from all violent intervention and disturbance, we perceive that our position is one of vast and special responsibility. No other Christian country has enjoyed such an advantage. In the achievement of our independence, and in the construction of our political institutions, we acquitted ourselves so as to acquire a vast moral power in the world. Towards this country the enlightened Christians and friends of humanity looked from all nations for an exemplification of self-government and a development of Christianity which should commence a career of progress for religion, and amelioration for humanity, never to end until all nations were brought under their influences. It was obvious that the eyes of the world were and have been upon us as Christians and self-governing citizens, and it became the duty of Christians in this country to consider and it so remains, what they could do to exalt their master's cause and to promote the best interests of humanity at home and abroad. (As denominations they were powerless in this broad view of their responsibilities; but as Christian citizens of the United States, they had full power to mould their social and political institutions and to develop and apply Christianity according to their will.)

There has been no time, since our origin as a

nation, when the united voices and efforts of the Christians of this country could not have accomplished any object they desired, provided the measure was conceived in the true spirit of Christian wisdom and toleration. There has been no time when it was not the duty of the Christians of this country to consider, under the full light of that Christianity which beamed upon them undimmed from the word of God, what policy and what measures were best fitted to improve and preserve our political institutions, and what course of government or legislation would most improve the moral, religious, and social well-being of the whole people. The consideration of such subjects imports the study of the most difficult and lofty problems involved in human destiny here and hereafter. If all have not gifts or leisure for such labor, many have both, and should be brought to see that this is eminently the work of Christians; one which they cannot omit nor turn over to unchristian hands without flagrant violation of religious obligations. The views of Christians, in reference to human welfare, instead of being more contracted, should be more broad and liberal than those of other men. Familiarity with such topics as the Creation and the Creator, the fall of man, and his redemption by the Son of God, the Divine Government, physical and moral, should exalt and strengthen, as well as enlarge the comprehension of Christians. When Christians, as a body, shall have appreciated the greatness of the field of inquiry, in reference to human weal and woe, which lies before them, and shall have become sensible that it is their peculiar duty to explore that field, without



shrinking from any portion, carrying with them the light of Christianity, men will be found having qualifications for this great task. Many reasons might be assigned why Christians have not made greater advances in this portion of their work. Under the pressure of Roman Catholic abuses, previous to the Reformation, the Christian mind could not rise to such conceptions. During the period of the Reformation, and nearly ever since, in Europe, a struggle has been carried on for the vindication of vital doctrines of Christianity, and for religious and civil liberty, which left but little opportunity for exploring a wider range of Christian obligations. When men could scarcely maintain the right of worshipping God according to their convictions of truth, they were not in a condition to carry the study of Christian duty to its ultimate scope and conclusion. They reduced into systematic form that theology which embraces our duty to God; but were seldom encouraged to develop freely and fully the Christian duty of man to man. Such discussions would have brought them in contact with powers temporal and spiritual, who could not endure the exposition of the true Christian doctrine of charity, as taught in the Word of God. This line of investigation and religious literature has been left to a more happy period of the world, when men are free, not only to utter the highest Christian aspirations, but to pursue those inquiries which relate to human happiness and destiny in this world, and to devise means to accomplish such ameliorations as the profoundest and boldest discoveries of truth may dictate. The times and the opportunities thus waited for are now coming,

and the corresponding responsibilities are now resting upon Christians. They must soon determine what they owe to their respective governments, and to their own fellow-citizens, and what they owe to humanity at large; and this to the farthest stretch of their intellectual vision and physical powers, and to the utmost scope of the Christian law of love.

In this field of Christian inquiry, much truth remains to be developed. The discussions which have so long and unprofitably occupied the minds of Christians, shed little light upon the real subject of human welfare; and are of little use except to demonstrate that the solution of the main problem does not lie in that direction. (Pure Christianity claims no power over the state as such, and no official connection with it. It claims no dominion nor control over communities of men, but merely over the hearts and lives of men individually; it lays its obligations impartially upon the master and the slave, the prince and the beggar, the ruler and the subject. It does not claim the right of converting Political into Christian Institutions, and of compelling men to yield them a servile obedience, but only through men enlightened and purified by Christianity, to mould, modify, and rear institutions suitable for Christian men—such as fully recognize Christianity, and afford a fair opportunity to develop its benefits, and diffuse its truths, without constraining the belief of any man. It asks full toleration, and yields it in return, so far in either case as may be possible, in the utmost spirit of that wise concession upon which the powers of all governments must be founded and exercised. Christianity seeks not secu-



lar authority; it asks institutions suitable for Christian men; (it assumes that Christians will make Political Institutions ultimately effective in promoting human welfare; it regenerates the man, and leaves the man to regenerate the State; it works from the heart to the life. The grand result of Christian wisdom and love must, in the special respect in which we are regarding it, be developed upward from the individual to the masses, and be at last seen in the laws, manners, industry, and social institutions of a whole nation.)

When the Christian statesman regards the masses of men who surround him as fellow-citizens, a multitude of topics may crowd upon him whilst reflecting upon their actual condition, their progressive, physical, and moral well-being, and the connection of this progress with their futurity. He perceives that a heavy responsibility lies upon the whole body of Christians in reference to the welfare of these masses, in this life as well as in that to come. He perceives that there can be nothing of moment in the lives of these multitudes, or in their relations with each other, to which the great commands "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them," or some other law of Christ, does not apply. Let the political or social institutions of a country be what they may, the commands of the Saviour are none the less binding where they have been made known. They cover the whole ground of human motives, human action, and human welfare, because they begin with the individual, and follow him into every position, and business, and relation of life. He

discovers that there is no "debateable ground between political economy and Christianity," because the latter claims jurisdiction over the whole ground of human welfare, co-extensive, if not exclusive.

Christianity begins with the welfare of the individual, and never forsakes that consideration in all the course and variety of human life; it cannot approve, therefore, any code of morals, any system of political economy, any philosophy of wealth, or any course of legislation which loses sight of individual well-being. No glory in war, no conquest, no increase of public revenue, no liberality in its expenditure, no exaltation of special interests, whether manufacturing or commercial, can compensate for the neglect and abuse of the bones and sinews, bodies and souls, of those upon whose labor this success is founded. Every system of wealth or production which is developed from any other point than the welfare of the individuals to which it is applicable, must be anti-Christian and unsound. The Christian philosopher who surveys the masses of a nation with reference to their best temporal interests, knows, from his own observation, as well as from history and the testimony of Revelation, that men are by nature unequal in mind and body; in power of intellect and in physical endurance; he rejoices to see them united in communities or nations, that the weak may be protected against the strong, and the simple against the cunning; he knows that in the race of life many must fall behind, not only from mental and physical inability to cope with their superiors, but from accidental causes beyond their control; and that if these are not upheld and carried onward by their stronger

associates, they must sink under the burdens of life: he knows these cases will be numerous, that Christianity forbids their being overlooked, and that they should also be an important subject of human legislation.

## LABOR AND ITS REWARDS.

The principal feature in the lives of masses of men is labor; they must get their bread by the labor of their hands. This is the inevitable lot of the many; the few will endeavor to escape the more severe tasks imposed by this lot, and some may escape altogether. The agriculturist must provide food for all, the manufacturer and mechanic must provide clothing and lodging for all; the professional man—the man of science must find medical and legal aid, science, skill, and education for all; and thus they are bound in the brotherhood of mutual dependence. (But the actual working of this mutual dependence has ever shown that a few men of superior mental power or attainments, or wealth or accidental advantages soon rise to positions of authority and control, which enable them to oppress those beneath them, and to draw to themselves, in various ways, and upon an infinity of pretexts, too large a proportion of the profits of labor. Although the visible power and wealth, and glory of a country soon appear concentrated in the higher

and more prominent *stratum* of society, the Christian philosopher cannot withdraw his eyes from the broad layers of the *under stratum*, where swarming crowds labor, and strive, and suffer. Among these should be the chosen field of Christian labor. Every soul below, however humble, is worth as much as the loftiest soul in the region of power and wealth above. One great point to be secured for these masses, is a simply just compensation for labor, and a fair field for industry and enterprise. This should be the principal aim of legislation in every nation, because it relates to the greatest interest of the largest number.

If there be four millions of laboring families in the United States, one dollar weekly added in money or its value in necessities, to the income of each family, would give to the laborers of this country, annually, a sum far greater than the average exports or imports of our foreign commerce. If the income by wages of each laboring family were increased only one hundred dollars yearly, the sum thus paid would amount to nearly threefold the average foreign exports of the country.

But the magnitude of this interest may be better conceived when we consider that there must be about ten millions of effective laboring persons in the United States, male and female, including the larger children. If these receive for the working days of each year but fifty cents daily, their whole annual wages would amount to fifteen hundred millions of dollars yearly; twenty-five cents daily added to their wages makes an addition of seven hundred and fifty millions. This exhibits the vast annual value of



the labor of the country in dollars and cents; but it should not be regarded merely in this aspect. It exhibits in gross the living of the poor. Is it enough? Is it justly distributed and faithfully dispensed? It is all their living: is it held back? Is it subject to undue fluctuation, controlled by selfishness, or reduced by fraud and oppression? A thousand such inquiries arise in the mind which surveys this great mass of humanity, and reflects how much power a favored few can exercise over all its interests. Christianity cannot regard this spectacle of labor with indifference, for in its arrangements are the issues of comfort and happiness on the one hand, and utter misery, destitution, pauperism, crime, disease and death on the other. In no Christian aspect of the subject can it be denied that if the multitudes labour they ought to have their reward, and that reward should not be less than a comfortable subsistence. To the extent their wages or reward falls short of this, they are enslaved without even the benefit of a master to have any care for them. In all countries where laborers who are the chief consumers have an opportunity of fixing their wages as against each other, they exact mutually a comfortable living for their labor. They should have this right.

It cannot be indifferent to Christianity how much wages the employer pays his hireling, nor how much interest the lender, nor what price the seller of goods charges his customers; nor how little the rich use their means in giving employment to those who are suffering for lack of labor. Christianity, nay the all-seeing eye of the compassionate Saviour of men

takes cognizance of this whole scene of labor in all its infinite bearings and relations, and all the violations of the law of love occurring in this active arena, are of course not unmarked. Whether the injustice observed is upon a small or a large scale, affecting mere classes of men or the entire population of laborers, the responsibility lies more or less heavily somewhere; and, "For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy will I arise, saith the Lord."

This spectacle of human industry and human suffering is often complicated, it is true, beyond all power of human scrutiny to unravel and explain. (No mere man may be able to determine and define the precise duties of all who stand related to it; but though no discrimination is equal to this task, Christian love and warmth can soften the whole mass, render it more plastic, more transparent, and more susceptible of new forms, and new and more just arrangements. The applications of mere human philosophy to these complicated questions of labor have been many, but almost without approximating a successful solution. They have, for the most part, assumed that, in the main, the institutions under which these sufferings were inflicted upon humanity were all right, and that the sufferings were the penalties of idleness, dissipation, disease, or other similar causes, in a great measure the fault of the sufferers. This philosophy consecrates the actual institutions of the day, as in the main all right, and casts all the blame of poverty upon those who suffer from it, merely offering them such palliations as the distress of the moment seems to demand, but with-



out acknowledging the right to any permanent remedy or any adequate solace. One of the remedies for this monstrous evil of ill-requited labor, reveals by its singular inapplicability, how little its nature is understood, and how little its extent is appreciated. It is earnestly argued that the whole problem of labor would be solved by complete commercial freedom. Looking upon merchants in the foreign trade as the great patrons of industry, who receive the products of labor, and transport them to distant lands, and who bring from thence, in exchange, the products of the labor of other climes, it is assumed that if all taxes, duties, and restraints, of every kind, affecting foreign trade, were removed, merchants would be all-sufficient friends of the producers. But as merchants make their gains by charging their own price for the trouble of purchasing, transmitting, and selling the products of labor, they are the very parties to whom the interests of labor should not be entrusted; for they are directly interested to oppress and over-reach both the laborers and the consumers of their products. Whatever the importance of commerce and commercial freedom, the lot of the hosts who toil for their daily bread is immeasurably a more important consideration. The wealth and strength of the state depend more on the competency and comfort of the many, than on the overgrown fortunes of a few. A million of sturdy laborers, worth five hundred dollars each, makes a far richer and stronger country than a thousand merchant princes worth half a million each. No system of human welfare can, indeed, be logically or actually developed from trade. We must go back from trade

to the commodity, and from the commodity to the producer; and we must not regard him as a mere machine. He labors to enjoy the fruits of his labor, and it should not be a matter of indifference to legislators, to governments, much less to Christians, whether the laborer is permitted to enjoy the full reward of his earnings, or whether intermediate agencies are allowed to absorb the largest proportion. The order of development to be observed in constructing, or in considering, social institutions must be Human well-being, Labor, Internal Trade, Free Trade with the world. These requisites being secured and maintained in this order in the social system, very many of the doctrines of Free Trade become applicable and true.

It is strange that it ever should have been thought possible to derive the laws of domestic industry from any theory of trade among nations. The merchants engaged in foreign trade do not, in Europe or America, constitute the thousandth part of the population, and the whole foreign trade of the most civilized nations, measured by the values exported or imported, seldom exceeds ten per cent. of the products of domestic industry, and averages less than five per cent. The most commercial nations, therefore, produce nine-tenths of the articles they consume, and on the average the nations of Europe and America are dependent on domestic production for nineteen-twentieths of their consumption. The theory of Free Trade assumes that all that need or can be done for the laborers who produce the vast quantities of commodities which are not destined for foreign trade and can never enter into it, is to make a perfectly

free and unobstructed arena for the operation of foreign merchants.

Now it is well known that foreign merchants understand the art of making gain as well as any other class, and that they are as ready to avail themselves of opportunities. They no doubt think favorably of a theory which proposes to place these great armies of laborers under their special care and patronage. They are usually men of large means and controlling immense credit. They frequent the great marts of commerce, at which the prices of commodities are generally fixed. Small as are their whole transactions compared with those of the internal trade, they look large, and are so for a few individuals and a few cities. This gives them an apparent importance and an apparent magnitude which is not so visible in the domestic trade. These few men naturally and easily obtain great power over prices, over credit, and over all the usual commercial agencies. Their interest is undoubtedly to purchase the products of labor as low as they can, and if they neglect to use their power to cheapen what they purchase, it will not accord with received usages of trade; so if they do not make the consumer pay the highest rates they can extort. These are the strong tendencies of their position, and that they work faithfully and surely in obedience to them is well known. In all this they merely do what others would do in their place. But how exempting these men from all duties, taxes, or obstructions in the way of their business should ever have been thought a boon or benefit to the great host of laborers, is indeed strange. If these foreign merchants who

keep one foot abroad and one at home, were great, beneficent, God-like beings, more devoted to human welfare than to any private ends, there might be foundation for this theory of trade. The truth is, that no theory nor practice of foreign trade which is greatly the less, can be adequate to explain, illustrate, or properly determine the interests of internal trade, which is the greater. Even if domestic trade were assumed as the controlling principle upon which industry was to be regulated, it would be wholly adequate and inapplicable.

(All trade, both foreign and domestic, is but an instrument of industry; no theory of this instrument can be rightly formed, until the theory and laws of industry, and the rights of laborers, are known and established.) The agency of trade, however necessary, is merely incidental; it is a tax upon industry, and should, therefore, as a burden, be kept within the strictest limits. In offering commercial action as the social safeguard of industry, a violent absurdity is committed: as well might a theory of architecture be developed from the means used to bring together the materials of a building, or from the tools used by the builders; or a theory of physiology from the drugs and the skill of apothecaries. Trade, considered by itself, leaves the producing laborer far behind and out of sight, and begins with the foreign merchant; it does not stoop to consider industry, but begins with the finished product, as soon as it has found its way into the channels of foreign commerce. If the honest inquirer can be induced to set out from the point indicated by this theory, he may find it hard to dispute the positions, or resist the conclusions



which are thrust upon him; but let him ever recur to the truth, that man comes before industry, and industry before trade, and he will readily perceive the fallacy of such doctrine.

Dr. Chalmers had a shrewd suspicion of the fallacy of this mode of treating such subjects, when he wrote as follows, in his *Civic Economy*,—"One of the most inveterate of these, (false speculations) is that by which not only the conduct of Parliament, but almost our whole authorship, in political economy, is infected. It proceeds on a preference of the means to the end. Capital and commerce, and the various branches of both, which are distinguished by so many interests, such as the shipping interest, and the manufacturing interest, and the trading interest; these supply so many high-sounding terms by which the public understanding has been juggled into a false estimate of the magnitude of things. The truth is, that the whole apparatus of commerce and capital is but of instrumental subserviency towards an ultimate and terminating object; and it is not, surely, by casting one's eye along the steps of a process, but it is by settling our regards upon the result of it, that the good of the whole is to be perceived."—"It is by several hundred ships that coals are carried from Newcastle to London; and it is *for* the comfort and utility of good fires to the families there, that they are so carried; and we affirm the latter to have the precedency, in consideration and importance, over the former."—"Now what we complain of is, that this principle is lost sight of, both by philosophers and statesmen; by political economists and politicians." (Vol. 3, p. 275.) This idea

is dwelt upon at length, and illustrated in various ways by the eloquent divine; but he did not master this principle so as to mark all its bearings, and make it operative in his mind. It was the solution of many a problem in social economy, but he failed to carry it with him in after speculations. The error pointed at in this passage is not merely a preference of the means to the end; it is, in very many instances, that of overlooking the end altogether.

The grand item in the wealth of every nation is the industry and mechanical skill and practical science of its laboring population. This includes the directing power of its machinery. This wealth should be the primary object of national care and solicitude; not merely for the sake of the magnitude of the annual product, but for the sake of the multitude of the annual producers. The welfare of this great host of laborers should be the chief consideration; that their efficiency may be raised to the highest point consistent with their advantage, and there sustained; that the rewards of labor may, as far as practicable, be just and regular; that the vast mass of producers may have every possible facility afforded them in the mutual exchange by domestic trade, of their own products at such rates as they may establish among themselves, all seeking that remuneration for labor which their peculiar circumstances may justify. There is certainly a rate of remuneration for labor in every country to which there would be a continual tendency and close approach in the progress of industry, if intervention of disturbing causes were excluded or duly regulated.



The mutual transactions of men constantly dealing with each other, under protection of wise and equal laws, would enable them to establish prices fixed with reference to the quantity of labor expended on every commodity of trade. Cheapness is not the chief object, for that may only be attained by the oppression of the producer, who is equally with the consumer under the protection of law. The greatest happiness of the greatest number is the main object ; and this implies a constant watchfulness and fraternal care of the government over its host of laborers, who are not only the largest number, but the most important portion of the population, and withal the most likely to be oppressed and injured. Let it not be urged that no public policy can reach the justice of this case, and that laborers must be left to take care of themselves. That is the policy which now prevails extensively ; but it has no spark of Christian morality in it. Let the subject of labor be viewed from the side of Christianity, and it will be found that to give up the poor laborer to the unchecked hand of merchant or manufacturer, is to abandon him to a life of discontent, despair, and pauperism ; it is to give him up unprotected to those whose interest it is to oppress and enslave, without the feelings or obligations of a master. The degradation and impoverishment of men who are wholly subject to the selfish domination of capital, commercial speculations, and revulsion, and still worse, manufacturing competition, is only a matter of time ; ruin is sure to settle upon them at last. The capitalist and merchant play the game, win all the high stakes, take the lion's share of the profits, and throw the losses upon the masses.

The whole movements of foreign commerce are exceedingly fluctuating; it is a game of innumerable contingencies, innumerable casualties and uncertainties, and partakes, in many departments, of all the excitements of gambling. How unfit to be a regulator of the rate of wages, or the patron of domestic labor! Each country must contain the elements upon which to determine the question of compensation to its own labor, without making it dependent upon the hazards of foreign trade.

To shield its laborers is then the most important care of a nation; for labor is the most important item in the wealth of a nation, and the care of the laborer is the highest moral as well as political consideration which can claim the attention of a government. It is from this point that all social economy should be developed, all legislation be derived, and all industrial and commercial regulations should be deduced. And when all this shall be done, if the spirit of Christianity—if brotherly kindness, if charity, if humanity, do not pervade the whole and temper its administration, the laborer must suffer and gradually sink to the state of dependence and suffering we have indicated. It is thus that the spirit of Christianity intervenes in almost every social problem and in every course of administration.

These problems all refer to men: all legislation and every administration of laws concern men; and Christianity never withdraws its regards from men in every position and every circumstance of life, and least of all should it lose sight of those multitudes who are least able to protect themselves, and most injuriously, if not ruinously affected by unwise, igno-

rant, or insufficient legislation, or by the iniquities of an oppressive administration. Christianity is by its very constitution the appointed protector of humanity, and being so, in no way can it so befriend the poor or ameliorate their condition, as by well-directed efforts to assure to the laborer the due reward of his labor. We do not hesitate, therefore, to place the whole subject of political economy under the supervision of Christianity, not of the church Catholic, nor of the church Protestant, but of considerate, kind, earnest, loving Christian intelligence and philanthropy; and to invoke the attention of all Christians of every name to every topic, to every philosophy, to all legislation, and to all questions of government affecting any important interest of humanity.

We have indulged in these remarks by way of illustrating the deep stake which Christianity has in national questions. Christians may not then be indifferent to any controlling influences or power, which are exercised, or to any of the great social questions which are agitated around them. They are or should be the constant, watchful, unwavering, and if possible, intelligent friends and defenders of men in all conditions of life. This does not involve the approbation of that which is wrong, nor the defence nor even palliation of that which is evil; it does not necessarily imply rebellion nor revolution in favor of the oppressed, nor any change of rulers; the putting down of despots or the erection of republics; it does not imply resistance to constituted authorities, nor the sudden destruction of old institutions, nor the hasty construction of new

social systems. It implies rather that clear view of human nature and human condition with its wants, and woes, its hopes and hazards, its present lot and future prospects, which enable a government under Christian influences to legislate directly, wisely, and efficiently for the best interests of a whole people, without remedies more violent than the disease, and without that mortal delay which wearies out the lifetime of a whole generation. Men should not be permitted to grow up and drag out a weary life of privation and sorrow, and leave this world without once knowing or being made to feel the benefits of Christian sympathy. That Christianity may well be called in question which does not make its power of sympathy felt through every nerve of the body politic. Genuine Christianity keeps in remembrance the whole human family; it labors for the whole as opportunity offers; it thinks for the whole; it seeks to communicate the offer of salvation, and it strives to be known and felt as the best friend of the whole in every aspect of human affairs. It comes proclaiming the glad tidings of eternal life to all, preaching the gospel to the poor, ushering in the law of charity, the reign of peace, mutual kindness and brotherly love. These may be looked for as indications of pure Christianity when permitted to shine out in its own unmarred lustre. We cannot accept any manifestations yet made of its benefits or glories as worthy of the cause. It must yet exert its full influence and its full wisdom upon our national and social institutions, that these in their turn may exert their full power in promoting the highest interests of humanity.



Wherever there is a large body of Christians, they can, by a faithful application of Christian principles, by active co-operation in the Christian life, infuse more or less of the very spirit of Christianity into the whole system of philosophy, of legislation, and of social institutions in which they are most concerned. Their energy will exceed that of other men, their wisdom will be greater, their philosophy will grow brighter from its Christian hues, and both legislation and social economy will gladly absorb those principles which are beautifully and strongly recommended by the lives of those who advocate them.

## SPECIAL DUTIES IN REFERENCE TO OUR POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS.

We can attain, probably, the most distinctive view of the duties of Christian Citizenship, by studying them in connection with the history, actual position and future destinies of our own favored land. In no country of the world have such perfect freedom of thought and action, Christian and political, been enjoyed as in the United States. It is a settled principle, that men's obligations will be measured by the talents committed to them, and the nature of their stewardship. We have received much; of us much will be required, and according to the nature of the favors bestowed will be the nature of the return to be made. Our colonial history abounds in



evidences of Providential favor ; it shows a varied lot of joyful and bitter experience, designed to prepare us for the happy deliverance and high destiny to which we have risen. All this history is rich in lessons for the Christian statesman, exhibiting as it does the Providential germs of our present political and social institutions. The study of this preliminary chapter in our history shows that we traversed a wilderness before we entered the happy land we now enjoy. Time will soon show whether we intend to make a wise and righteous use of the advantages conferred so bountifully, or whether we are to incur the displeasure of the Author of all good gifts by abusing His favor and neglecting our duties. Our present position was won from a proud and powerful nation by a long, uncertain, and arduous contest. It was not only a struggle which tried men's souls, it was a time in which men were tried and trained for the great and responsible duties of self-government. The hardships and the reverses ; the various discussions and experience of our Revolutionary war were the school in which our first statesmen were formed and taught to acknowledge the hand of God ; in this trying and eventful period, so conspicuous for display of self-denial, firmness, perseverance, and brotherly concord, they gathered the wisdom and other high qualifications which enabled them to form those institutions under which this land has risen so rapidly in population, material wealth, and moral power. If these institutions were the product of the profoundest human wisdom, combined with a Providential training ; if their wonderful success and undisputed benefits have verified their original excellence,

and demonstrated the importance of the trust administered for two generations by citizens of the United States, then so much the heavier is that responsibility which devolves upon that third generation now entering upon this important charge. It cannot be denied that this truth lies more heavily upon the consciences of Christian citizens than others.

If the forms of government which resulted from our revolutionary struggle were specially calculated to promote human well-being, and to give larger scope to Christianity, they were clearly the object of special Christian favor and care. If they had been obtained under the favor of a kind Providence, then it became the special duty of all who acknowledge Divine blessings to cherish, preserve, and place to good account the gifts bestowed. . Apart from Christianity itself, perhaps, no greater kindness was ever conferred upon men, than the establishment of our Federal and State governments, and the social institutions and legislation connected with them. It is, of course, an inquiry of vital import, what has been and is now doing by the Christians of the United States, in discharge of their special responsibilities, in reference to the continuance and improvement of these advantages. Man was placed in the garden of Eden, but he transgressed, and was driven from it; the Israelites were conducted to the promised land, and placed there under Heavenly guidance, and with the most assured prospects of a happy futurity if they were obedient to the Divine commands; they became perverse, and obstinately abused all the privileges bestowed upon them, abandoning themselves to a constant and increasing course of trans-

gression, and persevering therein against repeated judgments and warnings, until they were crushed, as a nation, and scattered, as a people, over the whole earth. They have remained for nearly eighteen hundred years a separate people; but as a monition to all the world, they have never in that time enjoyed a national existence, or any civil institutions of their own. It is possible that we may suffer like judgments, if we transgress in like manner. This is a fearful consideration when we reflect on the future good or evil which is involved in our present conduct. Does the appalling fate which has befallen the Jews, during eighteen centuries, rest upon any generation of that stubborn race which shortly preceded the termination of their national existence? If so, what human imagination can grasp the extent of the calamity and sorrow which have flowed from the transgressions of one generation? It is true that Jewish sins were not all or chiefly national; but as the Jewish people remain, it may be assumed that their national sins have drawn upon them this long deprivation of national existence. In all national respects we have, as a people, been far more favored than the Israelites; and the retribution for neglect and abuse must, in the course of Providence, be proportional.

If Christians of this country had fully realized their responsibilities and had contemplated them under such considerations as the foregoing, what a multitude of topics would have risen in their minds in our progress as a nation! It would have been their earliest effort to discuss and settle the precise relations of Christianity with our system of govern-

ment, and the precise bearing of Christian principles upon the legislation, administration, and the general policy of the country. It was necessary, in fact, to ascertain and define to what extent Christianity or its spirit was incorporated in our institutions. This would imply no proscription or persecution, because here Christianity enjoins toleration and kindness as much as it does activity and earnestness. Yet a line was to be drawn sufficiently distinct to separate what was Christian from what was opposed to it, whether Infidel, Barbarian, Pagan, or Moham-  
medan. Christians would not establish Christianity by law, but they could insist upon the pure morality of that system, as constituting an atmosphere in which they could freely breathe. They would not, even for conscience sake, permit heathenish violations of that morality which they consider essential to the highest human interests. They would not compel the observance of the Lord's Day as a religious institution, but they would establish it as a day of rest needful to man and beast and necessary to the comfort and enjoyment of Christians. They would not compel an acquiescence in any form of belief or worship, but they would not permit the disturbance of any system of religion not containing any features opposed to Christian morality. There would be one point then in this line of liberty which must necessarily be determined under our government by the majority. If this were not so, the most enormous wickedness might be perpetrated under cover of the rights of conscience, and the time might come when the whole criminal code would be repealed under the claims of conscience. Very



sincere Catholics, and Protestants too, have kindled the flames of persecution, and murdered innocent men for conscience sake, and all the history of martyrdom displays what men who have the power can do under religious pretences. The enormities of the French Revolution reveal what men can do from enmity to all religion. There must therefore, according to the nature of our systems of self-government, be an appeal in the last instance to the decision of majorities, even in relation to rights of conscience and opinion, but of course according to the regular form of procedure. In the beginning we set out as a Christian nation; we punished the profanation of the Lord's Day; we punished blasphemy; we were sworn upon the Holy Evangelists of Almighty God; we appointed chaplains for our army and navy, and for our legislative bodies, and our rulers repeatedly enjoined upon us days of Fasting and Thanksgiving and Prayer to God for blessings past and future. These are only a few of the instances in which as a People we paid national homage to the God of the Christians. Since the day of primitive Christianity, no country contained in proportion to its population a larger number of sincere and intelligent Christians. They were split up, it is true, into many denominations, but were still of accord upon the main doctrines of the Bible, and the grand features of the plan of salvation by Christ. These minor differences could not absolve them from the great duty under our political system of defining, defending, and establishing, not Christianity, but Christian morality, which is the real basis of our civilization and of our free institutions.



We are far from being opposed to such acts of national homage or worship as the existing public magistracy may recommend. We believe that Christian influences might be so exercised and extended, as to reach all the public authorities, and make such recommendations much more frequent. The result would be seen in the Christian demeanor of men in high station, and in the constant recognition of the claims of Christianity upon the nation.

To a large extent, our criminal codes enforce this Christian morality; but the line has not yet been defined which marks the boundary between religion and morality. There has been an extreme reluctance to enter upon this delineation; and while Christians have refrained from marking this boundary, and from occupying it with that unity of co-operation which would at once display their moral and political power, they have largely lost ground. The argument in favor of the rights of conscience is being stretched to all the extent possible, without displaying its utter absurdity of making every man his own judge of what is right and what is wrong. There are questions which should long since have been decided under the light of Christianity; and there are positions which should have been occupied and established by authority. The delicacy which has been felt in approaching this may have been commendable in some respects, but it has not been wise, nor profitable in its results. Much of the difficulty has arisen from the want of clear views. Many Christians have, from the beginning, shown a disposition to claim more than was right, and their ideas have been resisted not only by the enemies of religion, but by Christians of clearer views and greater tolera-

tion. No doubt these extravagant claims, on the part of some good people, have been one main obstacle to the progress of the discussion. But there is a line to be assumed which can, not only be well defined, but well defended. Christians are to be censured alike for claiming too much, and for not claiming enough. One portion failed in the wisdom of moderation, and another failed in moral courage and Christian manliness. The position should have been, from the first, We will exact no man's assent to the dogmas or worship of our faith, but we will establish that code of morality — the best the world has ever known — under which alone Christians can live in peace. Any church which claims more, either by its constitution or its actual demands, asks too much. No church, indeed, as such, can ask any thing; but the Christian people of our country who ask less are recreant to their duty.

In all this discussion and its results there should, of course, be a frank and earnest co-operation of all evangelical denominations. They should have no differences on the question, whether the code of morals under which they live is heathen, or infidel, or Christian. They should never hesitate to contend, that we inhabit a Christian country; and never intermit their labors to make its legislation and government such as Christians can own and approve.\* We

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\* We commend to the attention of the reader who is disposed to pursue this subject, "*An Inquiry into the Moral and Religious Character of the American Government*," published by Wiley and Putnam, New York, 1838, page 208. It is the best treatise on the subject we have seen, and deserves to be better known. See, also, Story on the Constitution of the United States, vol. 3, 702 and 722, and the various works there cited.

believe that if the Christian men of this country had from its origin been firm and united in their efforts to obtain such legislation as they should have asked, and nothing more, they would, in the main, have been successful. They incurred a heavy responsibility by not asking it, and one still more heavy by not even ascertaining what they were entitled to claim.

The proper training of the young is a subject which should early have engaged the attention of those who, by their courage, their wisdom, and their endurance, under the smiles of heaven, had gained such a happy national position. It was their desire to perpetuate the institutions which had cost them so much thought, anxious care, and hard experience. They had accomplished their glorious work in a severe school, in which all their virtues, and all their powers, were taxed. These seasons of trial over, the next generation was to be trained, for the preservation and gradual improvement of these political and social institutions, from youth to manhood. Education was of vital importance to the safety and progress of the country thus emancipated, and placed in the responsible position, before the world, of being the only one in which the people were actually governing themselves. It was a great work to train up men to receive such a trust, and to fulfil all its duties; it involved considerations which Christians only could fully appreciate. They alone recognised the Divine Hand which had led them through the dangers of a long war, and had delivered them from the still greater dangers of internal treason and mutual dissensions; and they alone felt the importance of their victory to the cause of Christianity. The proper

education of American youth was a duty so vast as to demand the co-operation of Christians of every name. It was not only a parental and denominational duty; it was a great national object. The coming generations were not only to be trained, by their parents and religious teachers, for the special circles of duty in which they might be called to act their part in life, but they were to receive a national education, into which should be fully infused our Christian morality, and a full knowledge of the importance of our national and state institutions to the cause of humanity and the progress of Christianity. No Christian denomination could, upon due inquiry, fail to appreciate such considerations, and yet no one could give them full effect in the general system of education; the members of none could forget that their children, few in comparative numbers, were to grow up and act their part in civil and religious life under all the advantages and encouragement to be derived from association with those who had been properly educated for their great duties, or under all the temptations, hindrances, and discouragements to be suffered from those who had grown up without liberal culture, without expansion of mind, and without due conception of their responsibilities to God or to man. But there are so many injunctions, direct and indirect, in the Scriptures, bearing on the duty of training up children in the way they should go, that there is little propriety in urging the selfish argument which inculcates the education of all children for the sake of our own. It may have been said, at any moment of our history, the public good now, and the public good hereafter, demands that the best



training possible shall be given to our children — to all our children ; and the only question which could be raised was, what kind of education this should be, and how it should be imparted.

The obvious reply to this question is, that the young should be trained with due reference to their private duties, public responsibilities, and eternal welfare. That which is implied in such an education as this, will bring us again to the conclusion that it could only be accomplished by the united efforts of all the Christians in the country. It must be such in its main features as all approve, or fail of its object in securing those national ends involved in the continued prosperity of our country. The denominational, and other special characteristics of our system of education, should be specially imparted. Christian citizens may not, however, from any selfish considerations, forget or lose sight of the whole country, and the cause of humanity, identified, as it is, with Christianity, while they labor to perpetuate the individuality of their several denominations in their descendants.

Now, whatever may be said or boasted about the progress of education in the United States, it cannot be pretended that the Christians of this country have risen to a proper conception of their responsibilities on this subject. They have not, collectively, given it the slightest examination ; they have not even, as we have seen, defined their position as Christians ; they have not said what they claimed, or disclaimed, as such ; they have not considered any duty which devolves upon them, collectively, as Christian citizens of a nation in which they have a moral power in



proportion as they exemplify Christianity, and a political power in proportion to their vigilance and their numbers. The Evangelical Christians of this Christian country, recognizing God as the Supreme Being, the Holy Scriptures as the Revelation of His Will, and Christianity as the purport of that Revelation, have had it in their power, ever since the origin of this government, to organize a complete system of public education, capable of embracing all our youth, and of placing the Bible in their schools, as containing the basis of our national morality—the sanctions of our criminal and commercial codes, and the exposition of our system of humanity. If this be a Christian nation, it is not because we establish Christianity by law; it is because we are a Christian people, and our legislation recognizes Christian morality as the source whence it draws its principles. A man may very earnestly approve and maintain the morality of the Bible, as many do, without receiving the Scriptures as a revelation from God, or without even conceding it as peculiar to Christianity. The very necessity of the case compels Christians to claim that, if our compulsory legislation does not go so far, in fact, as to establish Christian morality by law, it at least does not permit any other system to be set up; and, though a large toleration is the true spirit of Christianity, yet it is compelled to preserve and defend itself by insisting, when it has the power, upon those conditions which are indispensable to its peace and prevalence. Christians, therefore, resist the introduction of a Mahometan, or a Hindoo, or any heathen morality into this country; they cannot tolerate what is *contra bonos mores*.

Neither Christians nor their institutions are safe, in this migrating age of the world, if all such questions be not referable to the control of a majority.

Initiation in all needful branches of knowledge, including a full course of Christian morality derived from its fountain-head, is a duty which Christians of this country owe to all the children of the United States: besides which, Christians owe to their own children an education in Christianity, which is their special duty, and to which they will, of course, give the impress of their peculiar opinions. But it is scarcely less important, in this exclusive part of their education, that children should be carefully taught to understand the points of agreement, as well as of difference, among true Christians. There must always be points of difference to sunder the pious; much should therefore be made of the points of concord. So far as Christians are responsible for the permanence and increased usefulness of our political institutions; so far as they may regard the interests of humanity and Christianity to be involved in this, they are bound, in every way, to cultivate that unity of action and good feeling which will enable them to co-operate promptly and efficiently in every effort needful for the public welfare. It is, undeniably, wrong, nay, utterly unchristian, to pursue denominational ends with such exclusive attention as to lose sight of all public aims and enterprises, and to lose all advantage of the widest possible Christian co-operation.

It is into this error that the Christian citizens of the United States have been deeply betrayed. They are the less excusable because their respective

churches were not in danger from any external attack; they were not obliged to act continually on the defensive, and were not, therefore, under the necessity of building up, higher and higher, their party walls. Competition and jealousy have been suffered to work an estrangement, an excessive reserve, and an indisposition to co-operate, even for the most important objects, which it is lamentable to witness. If this does not involve greater transgressions of the laws of Christ than seems to be realized, we are under the most serious mistake of our life.

Our republican institutions have been the pride, throughout the world, of all the earnest friends of humanity. Their moral influence has already accomplished a mighty revolution in men's opinions as far as civilization has extended; they are regarded as an irrefutable demonstration of the capacity of men for self-government. The hopes of millions are yet fastened upon them with varying but, can we say, increasing confidence in us and in our great experiment. However highly the friends of humanity may prize our institutions or our position, or however we may be disposed to extol them, we cannot be absolved from the necessity of incessant vigilance, as the repositories of a trust so widely regarded as important. We cannot be faithful trustees unless we use our increasing knowledge and experience, not only for the appreciation of the true nature and worth of our institutions as they were originally framed, but also to improve them in form and value, and augment their efficiency. That extreme self-complacency which rests satisfied with even such forms and advantages as we now enjoy, is founded

upon an entire misapprehension of our real position and prospects. A very little foresight, or reference to history, was sufficient to convince our fathers that every human fabric must be not only subject to abuse but actually perishable. The framers of our constitutions could only propose and establish the best plans their wisdom suggested; they could not hand down, with these forms, the virtue needful to administer them; neither could they be insensible to the truth that free institutions required more patriotism, more firmness and greater disinterestedness to administer them than others in which the arm of power was more employed. They could not but know and anticipate, that in proportion as the restraints of authority were withdrawn, freedom of action supervened for the bad as well as for the good; for the rash as well as the prudent; for the unscrupulous as well as for the conscientious. To administer free institutions successfully demands, we are safe in asserting, a higher exercise of virtue, and greater activity of good men, than is usually observed under other forms of government. Freedom gives opportunities to vice, and tolerance to error, which must be met by moral power and exemplary teaching. This view of our hazards and difficulties has been far too little regarded. It should, from the first, have been the subject of anxious care and faithful attention. If some men were not intensely selfish, and others unwisely liberal; if some were not active, and others inert; if some were not strong, and some weak; some rich, and some poor; in fine, if there were not such infinite varieties of good and bad men, a well-devised system of self-government



like ours might work with the steadiness and regularity of a machine. But, as men are, such regularity is impossible; and the truth stares us in the face, that as we remove the restraints of authority the career of the unprincipled is made free in the same proportion as that of the wise and good. The undertaking to administer free and liberal forms of government involves, then, peculiar and heavy responsibilities. They are not such as Christians can shun, and they are such as impose very onerous penalties in case of neglect, mismanagement and failure. The history of the world affords no parallel to the responsibilities undertaken by our fathers, in reference to the institutions which yet survive, and under which we live; and, without too much boasting, we may say history affords no parallel to our administration of this trust. We may say this at the same moment that we confess we have fallen far below a faithful discharge of the duties of our position.

It was impossible to foresee, at first, all the forms of abuse which would be put in action under our free system; of course no safeguard could be provided against them. Our ancestors are less to blame for not having provided such securities than their successors have been for not observing the actual course of abusive movements, and for not providing against them as they developed their forms, powers, and results. Every form of government has its peculiar abuses, which grow, mature, and attain consistency and power, as interested men learn, by experience, how to carry on their work of evil, how to evade law, how to perpetuate their influence, how to cor-



rupt the fountain of authority and defile all its streams. Our government was, not only not free from such danger, it was peculiarly exposed to attacks upon its purity and vitality; and the diseases thus superinduced were likely to be virulent and dangerous, in proportion to the florid health and abundant fluids of the patient's system. Our fathers, therefore, while they assumed a post of honor assumed also one of danger. It would, indeed, have been confiding more in human virtue and forbearance than the experience of the past affords any warrant for doing, if the working of our government had not invited into action baneful passions, and dangerous men in all possible variety. The power of our vast republic, the patronage of its rulers, offices, salaries, the public treasury and its disbursing agencies, distinction, and influence are put up, by our system of government, not to the highest bidder, but to be struggled for by the boldest politicians, the most unscrupulous intriguers, and the most active demagogues. These prizes stand glittering in their eyes, and they feel that they have an equal right to contend for them. In this contest it must be expected that such men will display an industry, an energy, and a perseverance not to be equalled by men of modest worth or honorable decency. These political adventurers find, in the objects of their pursuit, rich bounties to offer those whom they invite to their standard. They engage in a strife for plunder, and they offer to divide the spoils; thus employing the offices of the country, its power, and the control of its treasury as means of corruption at once of fatal tendency and extensive operation.

Faithful attention to the true interests of our great country, as well as regard to the cause of humanity itself, demands a searching scrutiny into the real progress and actual condition of our free institutions. It is a necessary duty: we trust some skilful but firm hand will apply the probe, with a sharp eye to every portion of our system. This necessity arises from no alarming condition of the patient, demanding sudden or violent remedies: his is a sturdy frame, which may, for a long time, be abused with seeming impunity, as in time past. But it may not be wise to disregard the alarm of fire, even though we do not feel the wall to be hot against which we are reposing. There is no question, for facts prove it abundantly, that our institutions can exist under a fearful burden of abuses. The truth is, there is, mixed with our worst demagoguism, and greatest greediness for power and office, a certain respect for forms, and even law, which preserves appearances, when the substance is all removed, or changed into rottenness. Our worst politicians do not intend to ruin nor to overturn the government; they desire possession and control, not death and destruction. They are satisfied there shall be constitutions, laws, and all the frame-work of social institutions, provided they can turn all to their profit. They have no objection to religion or patriotism, provided it cannot rule. They can appropriate to themselves the credit of virtue in others, and thus frequently strengthen their position, without the sacrifice of individual good conduct. A very corrupt party may place a good man in office, whilst they strip him of all power of doing right, and make him the slave of their most unworthy purposes.

Our country may be in no danger of sudden destruction from any abuses which prevail, but very certain ruin may be impending, even though it may long delay its coming. The stages in the progress of civilization are few and far between: it requires, in the ordinary progress of humanity, a long period to develop a new phase of civilization — an actual step in moral advancement; thus the preparation of humanity which resulted in our independence and free institutions dates, as we have said, at least from the Reformation. If we are now indulging in vices or abuses so serious as to lower the standard of morality, and weaken the influence of Christianity, we are retrograding, and gradually preparing for a lower level in the scale of humanity. We cannot maintain our high position before the world for another half century without better deserving it. We cannot deserve it unless the mass of the discreet and virtuous shall stand ready to give efficient and constant aid to the maintenance of our institutions.

It would far exceed our limits, as well as our ability, to indicate the shortcomings of Christian men in our galaxy of republics, and the evil doings of the wicked and unwise. The mischiefs perpetrated, and the evil mingling in our systems, are much greater than is apprehended by those who have not given serious attention to the subject: we gradually become hardened to what is continually occurring about us; we lose our sense of enormities constantly witnessed, and therefore cease to appreciate the progress of evils that may be advancing with a deadly pace. We begin to regard the visitations of calamity, brought about by our own neglect, or the movements of de-

signing men, as strokes of inevitable destiny, to be quietly accepted as a part of our lot in life.

It would be an instructive history, which should furnish us with an enlightened and impartial appreciation of the progress of our national and State governments, with a strict reference to the best interests of the people, as to what has been done, and also what has been left undone. It would, indeed, be interesting to compare the results of the collective wisdom of legislatures and administrations with the most reliable conclusions of private wisdom. It would seem that if social science is susceptible of any rapid progress, it has enjoyed its fairest field in the halls of Congress, and in those of our multitudinous State Legislatures, in which nearly every question that concerns humanity comes up at times, and in every aspect, for discussion. The men selected for these discussions are those sent by the people themselves, the parties most interested in the results. In all the immense mass of legislation to which these numerous law-giving assemblies have given birth, great advance in the right direction has been made. Large experiences in social science have been attained; but who, that is fitted to judge, will not say the result is immeasurably beneath just expectation? The men thus assembled had, unhappily, to pass through the ordeal of the elections; an ordeal which few good men are willing to meet at all, and which very many cannot undergo without suffering a moral taint, unfitting them for legislative duty, or without becoming the slaves of influences destructive to all patriotism. Men, subjected to this evil, fall readily into the belief that the chief end of official station is



to obtain a reward for the labors of securing an election. There is, perhaps, no subject on which the friends of democratic institutions choose to remain under greater delusion and mystification than that of popular elections. No remedy having been discovered for the mischiefs attending them, nor any substitute for them, there seems to be a tacit agreement that silence shall be maintained on the subject, lest some degree of discredit should attach to republicanism. Universal suffrage is such a *beau idéal* of social perfection, that it may be impossible or cruel to disturb its hold upon men's confidence: our whole system of government is so completely mingled with the system of popular elections, that it appears dangerous to suggest a doubt, or to hazard an argument, unfriendly to them. But we must not shut our eyes to truth, however opposed to our preconceptions, nor refuse to see and admit what is manifestly and undeniably transpiring before us. Even if popular elections, such as ours, without other safeguards or guarantees, are necessary incidents of republican government, it is none the less necessary to estimate their mischiefs, that we may calculate the moral influences which must be used by way of counteraction. We believe that the moral evils of popular elections have been, at all times, and in every country, of vast magnitude. They furnish an arena for the play and exhibition of some of the worst propensities of human nature: not only so, they awake and bring into action these bad passions on a great scale, and fan them into an excitement and intensity which quicken the circulation of the poison through every artery and vein of the body politic, and spread abroad a



gambling spirit, heedless of all moral considerations, and of all self-respect. The conscience of the community becomes defiled, and insensible alike to the appeals of patriotism and interests of the people, civil or religious. Our system of elections presents exactly the conditions which enable unscrupulous and unworthy men to take the chief control of government into their hands. It furnishes to such men the very means and inducements which enable them effectually to sap public morals, and prey upon the vital interests of the country. The excitements of elections are so skilfully managed by interested aspirants, who are greedily grasping for power and its emoluments; the topics of discussion are so well chosen, and so incessantly and earnestly agitated, that the whole people become absorbed in a contest, the only result of which is disgrace and injury to them, let victory favor which side it may. Multitudes of men, under the extravagant, if not insane, excitement thus awakened, suffer themselves to be drilled, in the debasing arena of party politics, into prompt obedience to political gamblers, into a surrender of their own judgment, and into the surrender of all the pride, and often the decency, of manhood. And, what is scarce less to be lamented, those who refuse to participate personally in these scenes, learn to regard them with stoical inaction and hopeless indifference. That worse results have not followed such events, may be owing to the fact above mentioned, that demagogues have no interest in destroying institutions, the working of which they can turn to their private advantage. They prefer, if possible, that an external appearance of respectability and

public virtue should prevail, as a cloak to their practices. Let every one recur, for proof of the deleterious results of electioneering processes upon public morals and national welfare, to facts which must be within the knowledge of all. Even where, by way of exception, the candidate fittest for the office succeeds, we cannot flatter ourselves that the progress of corruption has not been rapid; but, in general, those fit for office will not struggle for it under such a system. Popular elections, then, do not ensure a selection of representatives worthy to be governors or legislators; not only so, they render the choice of such improbable and very rare. The people of the United States, deeply indebted as they are to their fathers, who handed down to them their present free institutions, are very little indebted to their immediate predecessors for legislation wisely directed to the general good. The blessings they now enjoy have not come to them from any sound, or skilful, or righteous, administration of the government, but from their own moral energy, industry, and physical courage. In one sense they are more of a self-governing people than was anticipated;—the regularly constituted authorities fail in fulfilling their appropriate functions, yet the people move onward by a spontaneous action, in the direction of the general interest, without due aid from legislation; without that unity and harmony of effect, needful to accomplish a strong progressive movement, the moral power of the country is still great; the country may still endure, without sinking, a long course of mismanagement; these free institutions may even grow more and more inefficient; the hopes of the friends of humanity may

sink to a lower ebb; but the nation may survive a long time. We must not, then, assume that we are making due progress in national welfare, because we are not visibly and rapidly receding.

We have a striking instance of the abuses which may be practised in the name of popular suffrage in the career of the present ruler of France, and of its utter inefficiency in affording a faithful representation of the real wishes of the people. Elevated by the free choice of the people to the high office of President of that country, Louis Napoleon soon violated his oath of office, sequestered all the power of the government, changed its form, assumed the Dictatorship, and having played, for a time, the absolute ruler without reserve, he finally called upon the people to elect him to the office he had usurped. It was done. It is a mistake to suppose, as many do, that we are so much in advance of Frenchmen in self-government that nothing of the kind could occur here. The centralization of power in Paris enabled the President to accomplish this wholesale usurpation under the cover of popular suffrage. Our subdivisions and state sovereignties render such treachery nearly impossible. If we had, from the beginning, been a consolidated instead of a federal government, our liberties would probably have perished long since.

In England their elections have so long, and so notoriously, been a scene of bribery, corruption, and fraud, that they are the dread and horror of good men there.\* They are ever meditating, but never

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\* Hear the testimony of a member of Parliament in England, as to the result of the recent election of a new Parliament in that

succeeding in their attempts to remedy the deadly diseases of their system; it is now branded as abominable, and the very stringent regulations heretofore adopted have been found inadequate to conquer so grievous an evil. At home, the extent of this mischief, while it should be chiefly studied in the actual movements of the electioneering campaigns, in the management of elections; in the quality of candidates selected; in the results of the contest upon the minds and principles of the people, and in the history of the various parties who assume to con-

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country. It is found in the "Economist," a very able London Journal, for the 7th of August, 1852:

"Not for the wealth of worlds, not for the Empire of the Old Caesars, would we consent to lay upon our consciences the sins and the sufferings comprised in, and consequent upon, a general election! the covetous desires aroused; the malignant passions excited and let loose; the debauchery stimulated and assisted; the wounded self-respect; the tarnished honor; the compromised independence of many candidates; the social ruin of the honest voter who stands sturdily by his principles; the moral ruin of the bribed or bullied voter who deserts them; the conceptions of public duty of a whole people incalculably bewildered and relaxed. For it is a mistake to suppose the evil passes with the hour,—that the old sense of right, justice, and truth revives in its pristine integrity as soon as the temporary storm which bent it is swept past. These recurring saturnalia never fail to leave enduring traces of their pestilential presence. . . . The sin and responsibility lie with the nation, which, in the person of its individual citizens, perpetrates the whole, and in its aggregate capacity permits the continued recurrence of such things, without peremptorily commanding their cessation—without insisting on the discovery and application of a remedy." It would be a question of great interest how far British Christians are responsible for these evils. The solution of that question would help us to determine some of our own responsibilities for the not less enormous evils of our own elections.



trol the elections, it may be seen clearly revealed in our legislative assemblies, national and state, in lines too strong to escape any observing eye. If such as feel an interest in this subject are not able to find their way into the arcana of our elections, they may, at one view, behold results so sad, so disgraceful, so injurious, as to humble the pride and lower the hopes of every honest man in the country, by simply observing the conduct and the materials of our present Congress.\* And what is true of that body, is true, to a greater or less extent, of every legislative assembly in the Union. We shrink from the use of such terms as would suffice aptly to depict the individual characters of a large majority of the members of the present Congress, and the legislative character of the whole body. When we reflect that these men have been chosen by the free suffrages of the citizens of this great, proud, and intelligent nation, we are filled with astonishment, if not dismay, and we exclaim, "If self-respect, if the cause of self-government, if the interests of humanity could not save us this flagrant disgrace, could not the Christians of the country have averted such a calamity?" When we bring to mind that these members of Congress have assumed, deliberately, a station in some respects the most important and responsible in the world, and that they have severally taken a solemn oath to fulfil its duties, we are smitten with emotions of indignation too strong for expression. There is yet a remnant of good men in Congress, but they are hopelessly

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\* These remarks were written before the close of the Session of 1851-52.



overpowered; their virtue may remain, but their courage is withered. They have no effective influence, not even the slightest pretence of it. They dare scarcely so much as lift their eyes to the great duties of their station. The greater number laugh in derision at the idea that honesty and patriotism should have any sway in Congress. Every measure of a general nature, designed for the public benefit, is scouted; and the member who ventures to speak on such subjects, or to urge such legislation, unless he is known to have some special private end in view, is regarded as super-serviceable, over-righteous, and eminently verdant. They pity, if they do not despise, all such as attempt to acquit themselves of the duties of their station and their oath of office. There runs not in Congress, then, the slightest perceivable current of legislative morality, or wisdom, or public virtue. The members have substantially repealed their oath of office, and acquitted themselves of all public obligation. They have resolved Congress into a grand agency of the various political parties, which manage the elections and aim at the control of the offices, the power of the country, its treasury, and the national domain.)

But the disgrace and the mischief does not terminate with the casting off all consideration for the public good, and exhibiting themselves as the mere agents and slaves of corrupt parties, headed by more corrupt leaders; they become prostituted servants of impure and crafty men, who are continually studying how they may gratify unlawful desires over the ruins of public virtue. To rob the treasury of the United States, there needs only a pretence for an appropriation, which may be either a robbery in

itself or may be enlarged into one; and were it not for the struggle to gain the largest share of the spoils where there is not enough to satisfy the greedy cravings of all, the treasury would soon be swept of its contents. To mere occasional spectators the conduct of Congress, as a body, may not at first appear so shameful. The deluded female who has forsaken the path of virtue may, to the eyes of the inexperienced and unwary, present the semblance and externals of virtue; her character is revealed at once to those who are seeking favors. So with Congress; those unacquainted with its true character may, at first, observe some remains of decency and dignity, or at least not suspect any wide departure from the path of purity; but let the observer reveal himself as seeking legislative action, and he will soon discover the real character. The flirtation will commence, the possibility of compliance becomes quite visible, the panders of corruption surround him, conditions are named, rivals for favor are mentioned, difficulties suggested, but full success is promised for a compensation, contingent or positive, which is openly named. The extent to which this moral prostitution has gone, under the shadow of our capitol, can be fully credited only by those who ascertain it upon the spot. How many there may be of these Congressional brokers—they deserve a name more descriptive of their calling—it is difficult to tell; they may be numbered by scores or hundreds.\* They fill a great variety of

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\* We are very far from including, in this class, many respectable gentlemen whose knowledge and services are really invaluable to those who have business before Congress. The cleverest of these men are among the sufferers by the state of things we so much deplore.

grades, from those who offer to procure special legislation for one, two, or three hundred thousand dollars to the humbler police of this hungry pack, whose office it may be to keep members in their seats at the hour of voting, or to keep them away, or to lead them to the gaming table to win their money, or to lend them money; for all which, and manifold other like services, they may receive a few dollars daily, and then a share of the plunder when a great prize is secured. These men pervade the whole atmosphere of Congress and the capitol; they hunt singly, in pairs, and in whole packs; and when fairly on foot for prey, no hounds in the world are more greedy, more keen of scent, more fleet, or sure of their wind in pursuit of game, than those which follow at the heels of members of Congress. It must be left for some accidental revelation to make known the relations between our national Legislators and these watchful, serviceable, faithful creatures, of whom it is hard to say, in the present state of our knowledge, which are the masters and which the servants. Whatever may be conjectured as to these relations, it is very clear that members of Congress are subjected to a distribution and classification, according to their several and combined objects and interests, according to the bearing of these on the aims of the players, who move all these classes and men like the pieces and pawns upon a chess-board. They are checked, controlled, moved, and results are produced which are only understood by the moving spirits. It is quite probable that the designing and astute wire-pullers who manage this complicated game are often disappointed by the very complications in

which they hide their interference, and which prove too intricate for human cunning; but whether successful or not in their private ends the public interests are alike neglected, and the corruption of Congress is deepened. The favors of Congress are thus constantly struggled for, on the floor of the capitol, by hosts of impassioned suitors utterly regardless of the dignity or reputation of that body.\*

Details could be furnished of Congressional shame and degradation which would far more than justify the language we have used. We are not able to draw the line which would mark how far this moral gangrene has affected the mass; but it has unquestionably proceeded so far as to paralyze all patriotic and proper action. No great measure of national policy can now be debated upon its merits; nor can it even be introduced, unless some private ends of party be subserved. But one topic has seriously engaged the attention of Congress during the present prolonged session, and that is one with which the members, as such, had not the slightest occasion to meddle — the succession to the Presidency. This subject has been an incessant theme for Congressional eloquence; it has swallowed up all other themes, and prolonged a session to nine months, of which the actual business could

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\* It is matter for profound thankfulness that one Senator, at least, has been aroused to a sense of self-respect. Towards the close of this session, Senator Houston offered a resolution of inquiry into these shameful practices. This movement may check, for awhile, these abuses, but to be effectual must be followed up with untiring perseverance, and a moral courage which nothing can daunt. If the Senator from Texas can destroy this Hydra of congressional corruption, he will deserve the highest reward his country can bestow.



have been done in one month. In the true spirit of gambling, they have been wholly absorbed in the great Presidential game. The claimant to whom money is as justly and honestly due as a man owes for his shoes or his coat, is thrust away from the doors of the Capitol without a moment's heed. Deficiencies in the appropriations of last year, which are now wanted to pay poor men for their labor, and to pay the current engagements of the government, are delayed more than half a year, in violation of common honesty; claims of undisputed justice, some of them as old as the Revolution, are besieging the justice of Congress, for nearly half a century. Who can tell the numbers of the destitute and suffering who are now waiting Congressional justice, without the slightest prospect of success? The debts assumed by the United States to the claimants upon the French government, now fifty years old, are not yet paid. France became indebted to citizens of the United States, in a large sum, for merchandize and ships taken by her cruisers. After a long period, the government of Louis Philippe acknowledged the debt and paid the money into the treasury of the United States, where it remains, through the refusal of Congress to order it to be paid to its rightful owners. Many of our merchants, whose property was thus taken from them, were ruined by the loss. They passed the remnant of their lives in fruitless applications to the justice of Congress—their widows and orphans have grown old in poverty and suffering, whilst continuing these fruitless applications. How much distress, how many weary lives have been worn out under this denial of justice, under the operation



of this vast act of practical dishonesty, may never be fully known in this world. It is as if one neighbor should say to another, I owe your friend, who lives next door to you, several thousand dollars; he is suffering for want of it; here is the amount; your regard for him will prevent all delay in paying it over. What would be thought of this neighbor if he should refuse to pay over the money, for twenty years, whilst its true owners were struggling with all the ills of poverty?

But we need not mention these refusals to meet the claims of mere justice, whilst millions are squandered in corrupt practices, or absorbed from the treasury by Congressional management, and without any view to the public good. Witness the use which has been made of the public printing, for which thrice too too much is paid, and the whole is a job reeking with corruption. The work is as badly executed as it is corruptly managed. To come to more modern instances, the President's message, in which, according to a duty prescribed by the Constitution, he is bound to recommend to the consideration of Congress such measures as he shall deem necessary and expedient, has laid on the table since its delivery, in December last, without being printed, and without being referred to the appropriate committees. There is in this a want of self-respect and official decorum for which it would be hard to find a parallel;—an enormity of indecency of which only such a body could be guilty. The Returns of the Census of 1850, containing information of the highest importance to the country at large, and of great interest to all the world, lie useless in the office, in which they have

long been completed; the expense of printing being merely the ostensible cause, the real difficulty being that the two great parties which divide the country are contending for the spoils of the printing. This printing will be eventually performed in a manner alike disgraceful to the art, to the nation, and the subject. But we may as well pause from this attempt at enumeration, and say there is no assignable limits to the perfidy, to the frauds, to the injustice, to the corrupt practices, to the breaches of trust, and breaches of oaths, and other official and private immoralities, which are committed in and about the Congress of the United States. They are such as, if brought to light in equal intensity of iniquity in any profession or department of social life, would bring on the perpetrators such a storm of indignation and scorn as would drive them from society with a reputation from which the pillory and the penitentiary would alike shrink with loathing and disgust.

We express ourselves strongly: would that we could even faintly approximate the truth! We should be sorry to indulge in such a sketch without an important object; we ask Christian citizens of the United States to contemplate this picture. They have mingled with, and have been active in, much of the party machinery which has fostered and fed this monstrous iniquity; their hands are buried in this moral filth—deeply stained in these streams of moral pollution. We do not mean, merely, that the Christians of this country could have averted this calamity; we mean that they have actually contributed largely to bring it about. We ask them to deliberate upon their responsibilities to their country,

to the cause of humanity, but chiefly to God, the Author of all the manifold blessings thus abused and endangered. Let them inquire of their consciences what interests of humanity and Christianity are at stake in the moral and religious progress of the United States, and how far these interests are put in jeopardy by such sins of commission and omission as are justly chargeable upon them, in all the course of our history.

All such facts and considerations form the ground of a solemn appeal to American Christians. Will they plead religious divisions as an excuse for the non-performance of imperative social duties? A number of the largest religious denominations regard each other as on the safe road to Heaven; travelling thither together, speaking the same language, living under the same laws, and owning the same government, — is it not a dangerous, a fatal selfishness, which forbids all co-operation, social and religious, for the common good? It may be difficult to overcome the obstacles to a common understanding, and a united effort, for the general welfare; but the object is great, and great ends are seldom attained without mighty efforts. Let the attempt be made; and first let the attention of Christians be earnestly given to such important topics as now most concern our social welfare, and most demand the anxious scrutiny of pious men.\* Let them give

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\* A happy instance of thus recurring to topics of great moment to the more general interests of religion and humanity, occurred in the proceedings of the recent General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, which met in Charleston, in the passage of resolutions on the subject of the claim of American Christians to that freedom of

deep heed to those events, and those questions, which are of vital importance in a civil and religious point of view, before they enter upon any course of action. In what quarter of our country do we perceive any adequate movement of this kind in the Christian public? We have heard of no consultation among leading men of different denominations. Among our valuable religious periodicals, there are none sufficiently devoted to high national topics, in their Christian aspect, although we are pleased to remark an increasing tendency in that direction. There should be a medium of communication, religious, political, and social, between the great Evangelical Denominations of this country, in which they might freely commune upon subjects of common interest to them all, to the whole country, and the whole family of man. Can men who hope to stand side by side in Heaven refuse to stand side by side here, in the cause of their common Master, and especially in matters on which they could not differ in opinion? Such utter estrangement as forbids all co-operation for a common good, among those of different denominations, argues such a mutual enmity as is at utter variance with the injunction, "*to love thy neighbor as thyself.*" Can the indulgence of such a spirit be safe for any or for all?

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religious worship, in foreign countries, which is allowed to the citizens of all other nations here. A very able committee was appointed to report upon this subject. We trust its consideration may lead to the discovery that there are far more important and pressing topics, relating to the condition, prospects, and final religious freedom of our people on their own soil, which cannot receive too early or too earnest an attention.



(The energies of the present day in our own country, and throughout the world, are sufficient to impel Christians to that union of sentiment and action which may secure important ends, without the sacrifice of minor differences. The longer they refuse this concert of opinion and action, the greater the injury and discredit do they inflict upon His cause whom they profess to serve. For this undue indulgence of sectarian estrangement, Christians have been punished in time past, and must continue to be under the Almighty displeasure, until they consent to place the general interests of Christianity and humanity as high, if not higher, in the scale of Christian efforts than the special interests of denominationalism.

## APPENDIX.

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THE following pages, consisting of an article from *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, for December, 1844, are so instructive, so spirited, so german to the matter of our tract, and contains so much we heartily approve, that we believe we shall confer a signal favor upon our readers by giving them a publication so little known, so inaccessible, and of such real value. We do not warrant the correctness of every expression, nor the soundness of every sentiment, but we commend it as eminently worth perusal.

### THE POLITICS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

It is less necessary just now to offer any elaborate apology for the seemingly heterogeneous combination contained in the above heading, than it would have been some ten or fifteen years ago. That "Religion has nothing to do with Politics," once familiarly admitted, by Liberals especially, almost as a truism, is fast dying out as a paradox; and men are coming to see that Religion has something—much—everything to do with Politics. All our great political questions are, in fact, daily running more and more into religious questions. In Ireland, religion is, what, indeed, it long has been, but perhaps is now more than at any previous time, the chief element of the "chief difficulty." In Scotland, religion has recently effected a dislocation and break-up of political parties, the full consequences of which yet remain to be developed. In England, not to speak of the Church-rate and Church-court questions, the first and greatest of all our national interests,

Education, is at a dead lock, because religious differences stop the way. All our politics are every day becoming more religious, and our religion more political. Free-trade orators quote Scripture like clergymen, and Free-trade sermons are preached from pulpits. The Anti-Corn-Law League receives aid from a Dissenting Ministers' Anti-Corn-Law Conference; and the struggle between the land-owning and manufacturing interests is likewise, incidentally but effectually, a struggle between the ecclesiastical and the dissenting interests. The leaders of the Complete Suffrage movement are leaders also in the Anti-State-Church movement. Again, if Free-trade has been taken up almost as a Dissenters' question, the Ten-hours' bill has been made a sort of Church question. We have seen the clergy of Leeds and Huddersfield agitate side by side with Messrs. Ferrand and Oastler; and that very high-church divine, Dr. Hook, is of opinion (in which we are very much of his way of thinking) that a clergyman is in his proper place when taking the chair at a workingmen's meeting. Chartism is a religion, and founds its churches; and Socialism takes the benefit of the Act of Toleration, as a Protestant Dissenting sect of Rational Religionists, and gets its lecturers and missionaries licensed as Protestant Dissenting Ministers. Puseyism is a political, as much as a religious movement. This curious revival of the old ecclesiastical Christianity was, in point of fact, a reaction against Schedule A, and certain of its anticipated consequences; and already is the theology of the Oxford Professor of Hebrew respectably represented in Parliament, where it forms the bond of a growing political party—a "New Generation" of British statesmen, a senatorial Young England.

In the tendency which these signs of the times variously indicate, to a nearer connection of religion with politics, there is nothing that need surprise us. The connection is rooted in the nature of things. Whatever we may think of the alliance of Church and State, the alliance of Religion and Politics is one of indisputable legitimacy. Every religion, every mode of religious belief and opinion, is more or

less directly related to the social moralities; and laws and institutions are the organs through which these express themselves—the body of which they are the soul. Every theory of Divine Providence and government draws after it, rather includes in it, a corresponding theory of human destination; therefore, of human duties; therefore, of human rights; therefore, of the civil and social arrangements under which the destination may best be attained, and the rights and duties most worthily realized.\* All which especially holds good of such a religion as the Christian—so practical, so human, so rich and full in its every-day moralities. As Episcopacy, Presbyterianism, Puseyism, Puritanism, Catholicism, Quakerism, Benthamism, have each of them their politics—have each of them a natural affinity to certain political ideas and maxims, so we propose to inquire what are the politics of that which was before them all, and will survive them all, the religion of the New Testament.

By this we do not mean to ask, what form of government, in Church or State, does the New Testament authoritatively declare to be the best? For we are not aware that the New Testament declares anything about the matter. In the obvious, superficial sense of the word, the New Testament has *no* politics. The Founder of Christianity and his first followers did not interfere with forms and modes of civil government, otherwise than to teach (in opposition to the popular judaical fanaticism, which refused tribute to Cæsar, on the ground that legitimacy and divine right were limited to the house of David) that all governments, which answer the common purposes of social union, are equally legitimate and of divine right; for “the powers that be are ordained of God.” They contented themselves with announcing broad and everlasting moral truths, destined, in the progress of time, gradually to regenerate society, and remould governments and politics into their own likeness. Neither shall we now inquire, what do New Testament texts say as to the proper objects and

\* See note in Tait, p. 749.—*Ed.*



limits (if any) of civil allegiance? Whether the Quaker interpretation of "Resist not evil," and the Tory interpretation of "Be subject to the higher powers," be sound or unsound, are points which we leave to the solution of theological exegesis. With any question of controverted texts and dogmas we have here no concern. Nor do we undertake the task of constructing from New Testament texts a systematic confession of political faith, or code of political morals; for we are not aware that the New Testament affords *data* for anything of the sort. It would, in truth, be wonderful if it did. All the circumstances of our civilization differ so widely from those of the age and generation to which the gospel was first promulgated, that the letter of its records cannot be expected to throw much direct light on the details of our political rights and duties. With reference, for example, to those two prominent and all-influencing elements of our present social state—Representative Institutions and the Press—with all the manifold rights and duties connected with and resulting from them, the New Testament yields us, of course, no specific textual guidance. Our electoral and politico-literary morality we are left to work out for ourselves, in the light of those broad principles of social duty which constitute the essence of the Christian ethics. The New Testament is so far from teaching politics systematically, that it leaves even the question of *private property* an open question, the earlier precedents of the Church seeming to favor community of goods, its subsequent history indicating the legitimacy, or at least permissibility, of individual appropriation. Leaving, then, all questions of texts and textual controversy, as belonging to the theologian rather than the political moralist, we shall simply inquire, what great general truths in the philosophy of social morals, what ideas and principles having a political bearing, are consecrated by the general tone and tenor of the volume which Christians revere as their rule of faith and practice. What moral lessons may the politician learn from that vast fact in the economy of Providence, that

stupendous spiritual revolution, whose opening scenes the books of the New Testament disclose?

"The Christian religion," says Novalis, in words which frequent quotation has rendered familiar to us, "is the root of all democracy—the highest fact in the Rights of Man." We believe that this utterance of high-flown "German mysticism," as some worthy people call it, is a piece of as sound and sober truth as ever was spoken. The Christian religion, taken from the most general point of view from which we can regard it—as a great moral and spiritual fact in the history of the world—consecrates and sanctifies those principles from which democracy most naturally springs, on which it most securely rests, by which human rights are most effectually vindicated, and which the tyrants and oppressors of mankind most heartily detest.

Thus, Christianity consecrates the principle of *appealing directly to the common people* on the very highest and deepest questions of human interest. The gospel treats the popular intellect with respect and friendliness. There is nothing esoteric in its doctrines or spirit. "What ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the house-tops," is the mandate of its beneficent Founder. It recognizes no aristocracy of caste or class, of birth or office—no aristocracy of intellect even: it "honors all men," by addressing itself to faculties and feelings which all men in common possess. That "the poor have the gospel preached unto them," is adduced by Jesus as one of the most distinctive signs of his divine mission; and it is this, more than anything else, which constitutes the gospel a great fact—the greatest of facts—in the philosophy of the Rights of Man. This preaching of a gospel to the poor, assumes that the poor have faculties for the appreciation of the profoundest of moral truths; that there is nothing too good to be given to them; that the enlightening of their understandings, the awakening of their feelings, the guiding of their aspirations to spiritual beauty, truth, and good, is a work worthy of the highest order of intelligence. The Christ-

ian religion is the loftiest wisdom descending, without any parade of condescension, to commune with the deepest ignorance—lifting up its voice, not in the schools of learning and science, but in the highways of human intercourse, in the very streets and market-places. Here, we take it, is the Education question settled, once for all, on the highest authority. The old Tory anti-education clamor about the danger of raising poor people's minds above their station in life is rebuked by the example of the inspired Teacher of the world. For, the sort of knowledge on which this dangerous tendency is most obviously chargeable, the knowledge which most powerfully raises men's minds above the level of the vulgar working world, is given freely and without reserve to all. Surely, if the doctrines of the Christian theology are not too stimulating a nutriment for common minds, neither is chemistry, nor geology, nor poetry, nor mathematics. The whole circle of the arts and sciences is, we apprehend, less calculated to raise poor people's minds above the station of life in which it has pleased Providence to place them, than is the disclosure of mysteries, into which, as we are told, "the angels desire to look."

The gospel is, then, an appeal to the many, the millions, the common people; assumes a capacity in the common people receptive of the deepest and weightiest of moral truths. It is more than this. It is an appeal to the many against the few—to the people *against their rulers*. Such, taken historically, is the most obvious external aspect of the public preaching of Jesus. It was a stirring up of the soul of the Hebrew commonalty into protest and spiritual revolt against a vicious ecclesiastical government. It was an endeavor to create in Palestine an enlightened public opinion, a pure and earnest public morality, adverse to the influence of the constituted authorities, and to the permanence of the existing order of things. That it was infinitely more than this—that this politico-moral feature of the teachings of Jesus was by no means the whole, nor even the chief part of their significance, we have, of course, no intention to deny. Still, it *was* this: to

say that Christianity does present this aspect, among others, is simply to state an historical fact. Jesus of Nazareth taught the Jewish people, with the utmost freedom and plainness, a morality subversive of the influence of their rulers; taught them to distrust those rulers as "blind," and to unmask them as "hypocrites." Here, then, we have another great political truth, resting on the highest authority, and exemplified in the most illustrious of precedents. The gospel consecrates the principle of moral-force agitation. It recognizes the right and duty of insurrection—the insurrection, that is, of the heart and understanding against hypocrisy and falsehood—though the hypocrisy and falsehood sit in the very seat of Moses, and are environed with the *prestige* of antiquity and legitimacy. It keeps no terms, except those of truth, with consecrated turpitude, and legitimate old-established iniquity. It brings human authorities, the most reverend and time-honored—human institutions, the most securely hedged round by tradition, popular veneration, and the use and wont of ages, to the test of eternal and divine moralities, proclaiming that every tree not of God's planting shall be rooted up. It speaks the plainest truths about public men in the plainest way. "Hypocrites," "extortioners," "serpents," "vipers," "children of hell,"—such is the dialect in which the New Testament speaks of corrupt and unprincipled rulers. The spirit of the book is that of antagonism to existing ideas and established authorities. The first preaching of the gospel drove constituted authorities mad with rage; scared a guilty tetrarch, and made a Roman governor tremble: and its written page\* denounces the oppressions and frauds of "rich men" of the landlord class, in a tone which nowadays would be thought to savor of the League, or even the Charter. What, precisely, may be the meaning of "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers," we do not here undertake to say; but the meaning of this and similar texts clearly is *not* that they to whom Providence has given the power of instruct-

\* James, ch. v.



ing the minds and stirring the hearts of their fellow-men, are to shrink from denouncing public immoralities, and agitating against public wrongs. Never was a greater mistake than that which is made when despots and aristocracies encourage poor people to read the Bible, in the hope of quieting them down under oppression. For any such purpose, the Bible is about the unfittest book in all literature. Whenever the Bible is read with the understanding and the heart, it will strengthen men's sense of right, and quicken their sensibilities to wrong—sanctify what tyrants call "sedition," by the example of a long line of agitators of the prophet and apostle class, and consecrate, as religion, a sturdy, defiant opposition to all manner of Pharaohs, Ahab's, Herods, Pilates, and Chief Priests.

The politics of the New Testament are *anti-hierarchical*. The whole book is an emphatic proclamation of religious equality; not that mere equality of sect with sect which seems to be at present our current interpretation of this "peculiar doctrine of the gospel," but the equality of man with man. The Christian religion knows nothing of human priesthods, other than the priesthood that is common to all good men and true, who render to their Maker the sacrifice of worthy deeds springing out of honest hearts. Not to a select and episcopally ordained few, but to "strangers scattered abroad," does the gospel address the honorable title of a "holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices." Christianity broke down the old priestly monopoly, Jewish and heathen, and made every man "king and priest unto God" on his own account. It neither recognizes nor constitutes any sacerdotal caste, any spiritual aristocracy (Episcopalian or Presbyterian), any order of men standing in *ex-officio* relations to Deity. It makes the relation of man to God individual and immediate. The Christianity that lifts a mitred front in courts and parliaments is not the Christianity of Christ. Uppermost rooms at feasts, chief seats in synagogues, and all the other great and small prizes of ecclesiastical ambition—including the "Rabbi, Rabbi" (or, as we phrase it, Very Reverend, Right Reverend, Most Reverend)—are discarded and dis-

owned by Him whose kingdom is not of this world. Marvelous it is how, not the spirit only, but the very letter of the New Testament, is set at naught by our modern priest-hoods. Christ said, in that grandly awful *concio ad populum* which closed the series of his public teachings, "Call no man your Father upon the earth:" yet "Father," "Right Reverend Father," "Right Reverend Father in God," is the style and title of modern Christian Episcopacy. Why do not they, for very shame's sake, score out the text at once, as an heretical interpolation?

The gospel is a consecration of the principle and spirit of *Protestantism*; and of the principle and spirit of free inquiry in matters of religious belief, of individual earnestness in moral conduct, of progressive reform in social institutions. Christianity makes no account of legitimacy, antiquity, or majorities. It is a protest for the practical spiritual needs of "the hour that now is," against the tyranny of traditions inherited from the past. Such a thing as the fastening of a creed of one generation on the faith of all succeeding ones, *in secula seculorum* — hedging round pulpits and university chairs with subscription to dead men's articles of belief (though the articles should happen to be all true), is a proceeding utterly opposed to its free and onward spirit. Christianity is a protest for the practical utilities of human nature and life, against the mechanical, ceremonial righteousness that exalts the means above the end, makes man the creature and slave of institutions, instead of their lord and master, and would have even withered hands and sightless eyes remain as they are, until the Sabbath of Moses has had its due. How noble, and yet how simple—simple as moral truth ever is—is that utterance of Christ's, "the Sabbath is made for man, not man for the Sabbath." This has been in the world these eighteen hundred years; but we are not come up with it yet. If this sentence happened to be, not in the New Testament, but in some parliamentary speech of Mr. Roebuck's or Mr. Hume's, many religious people would be dreadfully shocked, and we should never hear the last of the "blasphemy" and

“irreligion,” the daring anti-Christianity of the sentiment. The gospel is a protest for spiritual equality and brotherhood, against the overbearing assumptions and tyrannous impertinences of a priestly aristocracy—a protest for individual judgment, against sacerdotal and ecclesiastical authority. It is a true nonconformist’s gospel. Ecclesiastics may talk ever so learnedly and plausibly about the incapacity of the unlettered multitude to judge for themselves of the high questions of religion; about the need of adhesion to a centre of spiritual unity; of docile submission to the authority of a regularly-constituted and legitimately-ordained clergy: they may even quote texts in support of their claims, which the unskilled in Hebrew and Greek cannot exactly explain. But the broad fact remains stubbornly impervious to all the heaviest artillery of sacerdotal logic—that the Christian gospel is (historically) rooted and grounded in antagonism to authority; that on the “authority” principle it never could have got standing-room in the world; that all the authorities which men then revered—the authority of the Jewish priesthood, the authority of the heathen priesthood, the authority of the civil magistrate, the authority of the philosophers and *litterati*—were confederated to crush it. Nonconformity, dissent, free inquiry, individual conviction, mental independence, are forever consecrated by the religion of the New Testament, as the breath of its own life, the conditions of its own existence on the earth. The Book is a direct transfer of human allegiance, in things spiritual, from the civil and ecclesiastical powers to the judgment and conscience of the individual. With the New Testament in his hands, and a high, honest purpose in his heart, no man need ever be afraid of “heretic,” “schismatic,” “sedition-monger,” “babbler,” “blasphemer,” “pestilent fellow,” and other such missiles of the vocabulary of insolence dressed in authority. The gospel itself was once a heresy, a schism, a sedition, and a blasphemy, and would have been crushed in the cradle, if authority and hard words were arguments. The Christian religion is thus the “highest

fact" in the philosophy of that highest of human rights—Liberty of Prophesying.

The gospel is "the root of all democracy." Not that it specifically inculcates the overthrow of oligarchical and despotic governments, and the establishment of republics in their room; but it announces principles, it breathes a spirit, the universal prevalence of which would at once make oligarchy and despotism moral impossibilities. By its doctrine of human equality and brotherhood it ignores all social distinctions, except the immutable natural distinctions between wisdom and folly, righteousness and iniquity. It denounces all mammon-worship and title-worship. Its social spirit is that of a republican simplicity, equality, and self-respect. It recognizes no aristocracy but that of personal goodness, tested by social usefulness: "He that is greatest among you, let him be your servant." It is a very levelling gospel. Its early triumphs consisted, as the apostle eloquently boasts, in the foolish, and weak, and base things of the world confounding the wise, and mighty, and honored. The history of Christianity is that of a revolution which began with what cabinet-ministers and bishops call "the dregs of the people," and mounted upward and upward till it scaled and captured the throne of the Cæsars. The raising of valleys, and laying low of hills, was the burden of the prophetic announcement of the gospel's approach; and the "glory to God in the highest," which angels announced as its final aim, can only be realized when "peace on earth and good-will among men" shall be established universally on the basis of political justice.

The politics of the New Testament are in direct antagonism to the old heathen politics. These sacrificed the individual to the state; treated the state as everything, and the individual (except in his relations to the state) as nothing. In Christianity, the individual is everything; the state—otherwise than as an aggregate of individuals—nothing. National wealth, power, greatness, glory, manufacturing interest, commercial interest, agricultural interest, colonial and shipping interest, splendor and dignity of the crown, glorious constitution, and



the like—all these are nothing, in the politics of Christianity, except as representative of, or conducive to, the physical and moral well-being of individual men, women, and children; all are worse than nothing, if the happiness and virtue of individuals are to be sacrificed to their support. Not as a mere “member of society,” not as a mere fractional part of a vast and multitudinous whole called “community,” does Christianity take notice of the individual, but as an immortal child of God, having his own life to live, his own character to form, his own individuality to develop, his own soul to save. How deep this doctrine goes! It is the most revolutionary thing we have. It implies the radical falsity and wickedness of all social arrangements which demand the sacrifice of individual intellect, morality, and spiritual health, to the abstraction called society. Under the Christian charter of human rights and code of human duties, man—every man—has a destiny of his own to work out, a nature of his own to develop up to its highest possibility of health and strength; and whatever obstructs him in this, Christianity implicitly condemns. “Let my people go, saith the Lord, that they may serve ME,” is the plea of the Hebrew liberator for the emancipation of his race; and never were the rights of man advocated on a broader ground. The words are Jewish, but the spirit is Christian. Political enfranchisement, as the condition preliminary of a true and entire service of God; civil rights, as needful to intellectual and moral health; social justice, as the atmosphere in which the virtues and charities best grow—there is a principle here wide enough to cover the whole field of political reform. The aim of Christianity is the perfecting of the individual in whatsoever things are true, honest, just, virtuous, and lovely; and whatever, in social custom or legislative enactment, hinders the accomplishment of this aim, is unchristian and antichristian.

Here is the condemnation of slavery; and of some other things beside. The question, “Can a dependent elector be, in mental honesty and self-respect, a perfect Christian man?” contains the core of the ballot controversy. The question,

“Can a clergyman, with his bread, and his children’s bread, contingent on his unfaltering profession of belief in a particular set of theological opinions, faithfully discharge the Christian duty of proving all things?” is decisive as to the morality of enforced subscription to creeds and articles. The question, “Can a soldier, whose trade is homicide by word of command, whose profession is the abnegation of moral responsibility for the most responsible act a human creature can commit, be a living example of the Christian virtues of benevolence and justice?” settles the anti-christianity of standing armies. The question, “Can a grossly ignorant man be, at all points, a thorough Christian man?” is a short argument for national education. And the question, “Can a man, woman, or child, that is over-worked, under-fed, ill-housed, and ill-clad, enjoy intellectual and moral health, realize the spiritual development contemplated by the Christian gospel?” brings religion into the whole of our social economics. The right of the individual to the means of spiritual life and growth, to leisure, rest, recreation, physical and domestic comfort, as the conditions of his soul’s health—if this be not instantly decisive of the question of the Ten-hours’ bill, it is only because some other and nearer questions stand, for the present, between us and that: and because there would be no Christianity in legislating to make bad worse. But there the question is, waiting for us, to be settled when those other things shall have been put out of the way. That is not a Christian state of society, which, for some millions of people, renders the culture of the home virtues and affections little better than a physical impossibility. The taint of anti-christianity is on all social arrangements that hinder or abridge the spiritual growth of human beings.

A still more delicate inquiry opens on us, in this connection. Is *royalty*, thus tested, a Christian institution? Looking at the manifold and sore temptations to pride, sloth, self-indulgence, self-willedness, and hard-heartedness, incident to a *status* which hedges round, as with a sort of divinity, a fallible, imperfect (perhaps vicious and worthless) mortal;

places him in artificial and false relations to his fellow-men ; blunts his human sympathies by excluding from his ken the realities of human action and suffering ; raises him above the possibility of anything like a free and equal friendship, removes him out of the hearing of disagreeable truths, softens down his vices into venial foibles, and exaggerates the most commonplace amiabilities of temper or manner into extraordinary virtues—it seems fairly open to a question whether the monarchical institution is one that could exist in a thoroughly Christianized community. Has society a right, for the sake of any mere temporary and political convenience (real or supposed), to subject a human creature to such tremendous moral disadvantages? The query may strike some readers as a rather unorthodox one, but we have good episcopal authority for it. In a sermon by the present Bishop of London, we find the sad case of sovereigns stated in a way that cannot but awaken the keenest sympathies, and seems calculated even to alarm the conscience of society. After a feeling exhibition of the all but unbearable load of political anxieties and responsibilities that presses upon crowned heads, the Bishop proceeds : “ But all these disadvantages, and difficulties, and cares, are of little moment, compared with the dangers which surround the wearer of a crown, considered as a servant of God, a steward of his household, a member of Christ’s church, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. How difficult to *them*, above all other persons, must it be to realize the precept, ‘ Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world,’ when the world so assiduously spreads all its most seductive temptations before them, and courts their enjoyment of its pleasures. With every wish anticipated, or gratified as soon as expressed, with an unrestricted command of all the resources of luxury and art, living within a fence of ceremony and observance which the voice of truth can hardly penetrate, and, even when heard at distant intervals, perhaps may shock by its unwonted and unwelcome sound, how is it possible for them not to become ‘ lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God?’ How can they be brought

to learn the peculiar lessons which *must* be learned by all the disciples of that Master who said, 'Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart?' '\* The right reverend preacher is, it must be confessed, less happy in his solution of the problem than in the statement of it. He tells us plainly, *it is a case for omnipotence*: "Our Saviour's answer to his disciples, when they inquired how any rich man could be saved, must be ours: 'With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible.' . . . He can endow the mightiest monarch with the graces of the lowliest saint. This is indeed one of the noblest triumphs of his almighty power."

From all which, the Bishop makes out a strong argument for "the duty of prayer and intercession for our rulers." The conclusion strikes us, however, as being much narrower than the premises warrant and require. Have we any right, as a Christian community, to place our rulers in such a predicament that their salvation becomes (humanly speaking) an impossibility, a subject for the noblest triumphs of almighty power?—is an inquiry which the episcopal reasoning irresistibly suggests. The moral and religious grievances of the sovereign class seem, like the physical and social grievances of the negro-slave class, or the factory-child class, to call for some more tangible and mundane mode of redress than "prayer and intercession." Our preacher takes too desponding a tone. He treats the royal soul as though it were already *in extremis*, rejects all ordinary medical appliances as unavailing, and has nothing to recommend for his spiritual patient but the administration of the last rites of the church. The writer of the above-quoted condemnation of the monarchical institution ought, in consistency, to be, if not a downright republican, at least a most strenuous advocate of whatever tends to the relaxation or abandonment of an etiquette adverse to Christian sincerity, the curtailment of prerogatives perilous to Christian humility, and the retrenchment of a

\* "The Duty of Prayer and Intercession for our Rulers," a Sermon by Charles James, Lord Bishop of London. 1838.



splendor incompatible with Christian simplicity and spirituality. Yet, after all, why talk of royalty, when there is episcopacy? The Bishop's own case is one of the hardest. Twenty thousand pounds sterling *per annum* for life, with palaces, patronage, and perquisites—surely there is matter here for the exercise of “the duty of prayer and intercession.” What spiritual dangers can be compared with those which “surround the wearer of a” mitre, “considered as a servant of God, a steward of his household, a member of Christ's church, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven? How difficult to *them*, above all persons, must it be to realize the precept,” &c.

In virtue of this principle of the *sacredness of the individual*, the Christian gospel is a vast regenerative, revolutionizing force, permeating the whole structure of society and its institutions. We are learning to feel that even the criminal is within the scope of its operation. The “vindictive” theory of punishment—which sacrifices the individual to the passions of the community—is now pretty well exploded; and the “exemplary” theory—which sacrifices the individual to the interests of the community—is less exclusively insisted on than it was: we modify it with a large admixture of the “reformatory” theory, in which the individual is paramount. The feeling gains ground in society every year, and from time to time expresses itself in legislation, that whatever rights the criminal may have forfeited, he cannot forfeit his right to the means of moral improvement; and that any punishment, however well deserved and exemplary, is essentially defective if it be not adapted to promote (otherwise than in the ecclesiastical courts' fashion) the soul's health of the offender. That punishment which dismisses the culprit from the world as an incurable—cuts him off from all opportunity and possibility of restoration, with the miserable mockery of a judicial prayer that “the Lord may have mercy on his soul”—is gradually dropping into desuetude: and society seems less and less willing to despair of the moral amendment of those who have most deeply sinned against it.

The Christian doctrine of human brotherhood, so nobly enunciated by St. Paul at Athens, "God hath made of one blood all nations of men;" this doctrine of the unity of the human race, in nature, in rights, and in destination, is a distinct condemnation of another point in the politics of heathenism: if, indeed, it be fair to charge on the poor heathen, vices which have been faithfully copied, with additions and improvements, by every Christian nation under the sun. We speak of that exaggerated and exclusive *patriotism*, which treads down, without a scruple, the rights of weaker rivals, and counts all things fair in war. On the hackneyed objection to Christianity, that it does not inculcate patriotism, we need not waste a word; to this sort of patriotism—whether it take the form of military aggression, or of diplomatic lying and chicane—Christianity stands, without a question, in strong antagonism. Of the politics of the New Testament, a great first principle is international justice, sincerity, and magnanimity—the subordination of all mere national interests, or supposed and seeming interests, to the one eternal, impartial law of right. Will it be said that this is a truism, scarcely needing a special and formal statement? Unfortunately, the truism is not yet allowed by our rulers to pass as a truth, not even in the abstract. The present Prime Minister of this Christian empire, which has its missionaries and its Bibles out at the ends of the earth, converting the heathen, does not hold, even in the abstract, that barbarian, Scythian, bond and free, are one in the eye of God, and God's law. He does not hold that the moral law of nations is an equal and impartial law. He believes not in the Christian faith that, as God has made all nations of one blood, so he has subjected all to one rule of right. He believes, rather, in the heathen faith that there is "some great uncontrollable principle at work" in the intercourses of civilization with barbarism,\* which "demands a different course of conduct to be pursued" from that which the principle of Christian equity

\* See note in Tait, p. 754.—*Ed.*

demands. He believes, in short, that the political morality of the New Testament, though all very well in its way and place, among gentlemen and gentlemanlike nations, will not do at the antipodes: the rule of doing to others as we would that others should do to us, is inapplicable to the peculiar and complicated circumstances of our Indian empire. A more heathenish doctrine than this of the "great uncontrollable principle" for dispensing with principle when and where convenient, could not be devised; it is worthy of some old robbing and murdering Roman general or proconsul. And the thing passed in our Christian House of Commons, with only an honest word or two of protest from one or two voices, went quietly through the press along with the rest of the day's news, and circulated over the Christian country without a syllable of objection from the Christian bishops, priests, and deacons. There was no clerical agitation got up against the great uncontrollable principle, as there was against the Whig Church-rate and Education schemes—nothing said about converting Sir Robert Peel and his majority to the Christian religion. Our ecclesiastical Christianity has other work on hand, of a more interesting kind—mounting guard on Irish tithes, and barricading the Universities against Dissenters. Its solicitude for the soul's health of the people is all expended on recusant rate-payers.

It must be allowed that the Christianity of this country rarely appears to much advantage in our politics. On nearly every one of the public questions which politicians make religious questions, the Christianity of our legislators—those of them who are most given to talk about their Christianity—will be found on the wrong side. The Christian religion is seldom brought into politics except to do mischief, to stop the way of rational and beneficent legislation. Our political and parliamentary Christianity is a Christianity that wages fierce war against poor men's hot Sunday dinners, and Sunday walks in green fields, and Sunday excursions by steamboat and railway, and Sunday visits to museums, picture-galleries, and zoological gardens—against everything that can refine

the tastes, stimulate the intellect, refresh the heart, and do good to the health and spirits of the pallid week-day dwellers in city lanes and alleys. It is fond of extending the list of the theological *mala prohibita*. It is never so well pleased as when it is restricting somebody from doing or enjoying something: there are men who would not, if they could help it, let poor people do the very thing that Jesus Christ himself did—walk through the fields on the "Sabbath-day. It is an obstructive and teasing, a frivolous and vexatious Christianity. It stops the people from being educated. In the present state of opinion and feeling on this subject, there is positively nothing in the way of a large and effectual measure of national education, except our ecclesiastical and sectarian Christianity: the thing might be done to-morrow, but that the Jews of the established church will have no dealings with the Samaritans of dissent. It is a Christianity that makes a conscience of keeping Ireland, year after year, at the boiling-point of peaceable and constitutional insurrection, rather than relinquish its uppermost room at the feast of fat things, and its chief seat in courts and parliaments. It is a Christianity that cannot live without its orthodox hands in heretical pockets. Church surplices must be washed and mangled, church organs tuned, church clocks wound up, and church roofs new slated, at the cost and charge of the people who do not go to church; and they call that *paying a pepper-corn rent to God*. It is a meddling, busy-bodied Christianity, about trifles or things indifferent, and politely dumb in view of evils which it ought to denounce with voice of thunder. The church has not a word to say against the iniquity of taxing the poor man's bread, to swell the rich man's rent. Our political Christianity lifts up its voice, not against fraud, hypocrisy, oppression, class-legislation, and the spirit of wickedness in high places; but against heresy, schism, unbelief, and misbelief; forgetting that the "Woe, woe unto you" of the Founder of the Christian church was pointed; not at the Samaritan schismatics or the Sadducee infidels, but at the



orthodox, duly-consecrated, and legitimately-ordained "Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites."

The political ideas and principles of the New Testament, like all other great moral truths, tend ever—with an inherent, resistless, though slowly-working force—to their own realization. It says nothing against this, that we have had Christianity in the world these eighteen hundred years, without having yet properly learned one of its lessons. We have had the sun and moon these six thousand years, day unto day uttering speech, and night unto night showing knowledge—and we have not yet learned *their* religion. The Christian gospel of brotherhood and spiritual equality, in the laborious slowness of its progress, the limitation of its influence, and the extent and seeming inveteracy of its corruptions, only shares the fate of other moral truths. Meanwhile, it furnishes us with abundant encouragement, under the tardy and imperfect character of its own successes. The symbols in which its Founder pictured its future progress are indicative, not of miraculous metamorphosis, but of natural growth—"first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear:" nor are the enemy and his tares forgotten. Truly, "there are many Antichrists," as the apostle says: and their power is great as their natures are various: the Antichrist of mammon, the Antichrist of aristocracy and class-legislation, the Antichrist of spiritual tyranny, the Antichrist of Pharisaism and hypocrisy, the Antichrist of the "great uncontrollable principle" that loves a gainful iniquity better than a losing honesty. But the Politics of the New Testament—the politics of justice and mercy, of spiritual liberty and equality—are stronger than all the Antichrists together. The Christian gospel is, at this moment, all external hindrances and internal corruptions notwithstanding, the mightiest moral force we have, both as a conservator and destroyer. There are no signs of old age upon it. It can, in truth, grow old only when the world grows old. The nations of the European family received it in their infancy; and, in the life of

nations, as of the individual, those are the vital and enduring characteristics which are impressed during the age of early, rapid growth. The religion whose author loved, under the title of Son of Man, to identify himself with universal humanity; the religion which began its life with putting down polygamy, gladiatorship, serfdom, and other such abominations; which, in our own time, has reformed our penal code, stopped our slave-trade, emancipated our slaves, and is still fighting the good fight beyond the Atlantic, showing abundant signs, by the way, where the real strength lies; this religion, which, despite of all the corruptions that have been fastened on it, and all the crimes that have been perpetrated in its name, has ever been a civilizing influence in the midst of barbarism, and a moralizing influence in the heart of an effeminate and artificial civilization, will live while any part of its benign mission remains unaccomplished—will live till it has exorcised all the evil spirits that haunt and vex the world. The moral ideas that constitute the life of Christianity contain within themselves the promise and programme of our age to come.

The world has long since had out its laugh at the Fifth-Monarchy men. The notion of those people has, indeed, a sufficiently grotesque look, as clad in the garb of the century before last: yet the idea is a grand and true one—of a kingdom different from the old kingdoms of the world, ruled by other laws and in another spirit—a kingdom of heaven, a reign of truth and right, a Republic of the Virtues, a universal *Tugendbund*. In another name, and under another form, the world will have its Fifth Monarchy yet. Such, at least, is our reading of the Politics of the New Testament.

SOME NOTICE OF A REVIEW,  
BY A LAYMAN, OF  
NEW THEMES FOR THE PROTESTANT CLERGY.

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PHILADELPHIA, Oct. 12, 1852.

MESSRS. LIPPINCOTT, GRAMBO, & CO.:—

GENTLEMEN: You ask my opinion of the "Review, by a Layman, of *New Themes for the Protestant Clergy*." Little time as is at my disposal just now, it seems scarcely justice to you or myself not to notice such a popular publication. You will have readily perceived that not all the censure in which it abounds is due to the critic himself. It is in part a compilation of what has been said and written by others.

The "Review" presents itself in two aspects:—

Firstly: Its criticisms, and their original authors.

Secondly: The critic, or compiler.

The authors of these severe charges demand the first attention. In regard to them, it would not be difficult to administer severe retaliation, and to deal in sharp retort. At times the inclination to resort to that kind of redress is hard to restrain; but my judgment and better feeling do not sympathize with this occasional disposition to retaliate. My chief anxiety is to be understood by those who have so grievously misapprehended the purport of "*New Themes for the Protestant Clergy*," and the design of the author. It is no doubt largely my fault that so much misapprehension has occurred: that it is not wholly my fault, is plain from the

fact that so many pious and intelligent persons have fully understood the work, and appreciated the intentions of the writer. It is truly marvellous that intelligent and educated men, having so many views in common, both religious and social, should entertain opinions so opposite of such a volume. This unexpected result furnishes a valuable lesson to the student of human nature. To me, it has been one of signal profit; it has afforded various striking replies to the question: "What impedes the progress of Christianity?" But this is anticipating remarks intended to be explanatory of the general intent and object of "New Themes."

It appears to me right to assume that those who first sounded the alarm in reference to its evil tendencies, labored under at least some degree of mistake. Those who objected to the tone and positions of the writer acquitted him of evil intentions: he had said the most dreadful things, but he did not mean them; there was immeasurable evil in what was written, but it was kindly believed not to be in the heart of the author. There must have been some mitigating words in the book which thus saved the writer from the condemnation which was visited upon the work. Other pious, learned, and discriminating men, without being blind to its faults, at once perceived the scope of the work, and heartily approved its general design. The number and character of those among the clergy and the laity, who have thus signified their approbation, is so great, and their testimony is so strong, as further to warrant me in assuming that much of the censure has proceeded from misconception—from a state of mind and a state of knowledge not prepared for the consideration of the subjects presented, and less still for the perhaps too unreserved manner in which they were treated. Under this impression, it is my intention to avail myself of every favorable opportunity of so stating my views as to make them better understood; the present is one which should not pass unimproved. It will require not one but probably many efforts to bring fully to the minds of many good men what is intended under the phrase, "New Themes for the Protestant



Clergy." It is my intention if spared, and permitted the leisure, to pursue these topics as occasion arises, and more fully point out the subjects which it was hoped the Clergy might be stimulated to take in hand. The tract from your press, to which this letter is appended, written several months since, was penned and is given to the public with this design. It will be found to have imperfections of the same kind as those charged upon "New Themes." It does not treat the subject it handles logically or dogmatically. It invokes the earnest attention of Christians to considerations too much neglected. It does not pronounce definitively what is the truth, but it calls Christians to serious inquiry, to honest research, and then to decision and action. The misconceptions of which "New Themes" has been the fruitful source, have arisen, it is believed, mainly, not so much from absolute divergence of opinion, as from the very different points of view from which the subjects have been contemplated. Those who stand in the landscape cannot describe nor paint it in the same terms or colors as those who regard it from a distance, and as a whole. On this ground, some allowance may be claimed for him who has taken a new position until his announcements can be verified by the observation of others. It is a sad mistake to assume that the field of humanity has all been explored, or that the heights or the depths of Christianity have been reached as yet by any human eye. The landscape in each widens as we advance, and no human glance can ever cover the whole. But no eye should be satisfied while more remains to be seen. It requires no small effort to detach one's self from the busy turmoil and exciting scenes of social and religious life, and to withdraw so far as to look from a place apart at the drama enacted upon the stage of life. The spectacle thus obtained is worthy the highest intellectual effort; it is instructive beyond all definite estimation.

Let any one who would find this point of view, ascertain what *all of Protestantism* is doing in the cause of humanity; how it is promoting the progress of social amelioration; and

the position it occupies on all the great questions which most concern the peace, and happiness, and well-being of men in this life. It may cost many years of effort and inquiry to occupy a position which will afford a full view of the subject, the complications of which are enough to deter any but the most resolute. It cannot be done without severe mental discipline and painful struggles; for many things have to be unlearned. But it costs no sacrifice of orthodoxy. On the contrary, it would vindicate orthodoxy from much for which it should never have been responsible; it will afford a clearer view of the elementary doctrines of Christianity than can be had in any other way. This view must be obtained with one hand toward Divinity, the other toward Humanity, an open Bible before the eyes, a heart raised to God for the enlightening influences of his Holy Spirit, and with a devout looking, not only to Christ our atoning Saviour, but to Christ our Lawgiver, our Teacher, our Great Exemplar, not less to be *heeded* and *obeyed* than to be accepted and worshipped. This method of inquiry will exalt Christianity above all former estimation, by exhibiting its fitness and applicability, not only to save men in eternity, but to save them from a vast sum of misery, wickedness, and oppression in this world; thus increasing their grounds for gratitude to God, and leaving them time and opportunity to prepare for Heaven.

Has collective Protestantism no grave faults to answer for? Does it claim infallibility? If not, if it be conceded that Protestantism has failings, then what are they? Are they sins of omission or commission, or both? Let a deep search be made into the grand household and conscience of Protestantism. Let there be no flinching, and no sparing; let neither spiritual pride nor false shame prevent a full discovery and an honest confession. Whilst Protestantism is dear to all for the good done under its banners, and for that which is still doing, let no one identify it with Christianity, and thus make the latter responsible for all that passes under the name of the former. The sins of the purest Christian are still sins, and make no part of his Christianity; they are to be sought

for and repented of, and avoided. So neither should the sins of Protestantism be excused or covered, much less should they be allowed to bring reproach upon the cause of Christ. One of the great sins of Protestantism, is the refusal to co-operate—to be, even for the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, in any aspect, a unit; even for the common defence against a common enemy. Christianity has one voice, and utters simply the teachings of the Holy Scriptures; Protestantism has many tongues, and utters, in the interpretation of the Scriptures, a variety of voices, and these very far from being in harmony. Yet let the inquiry be made, if there be not points of concord, and those of vital import to the highest interests of Christianity and humanity, on which Protestantism can speak with one voice, and work with undivided energies. If there be such points of concord, admitting unity of voice and action, and no advantage taken of them, then Protestantism is guilty of a great and deadly offence against Christianity.

Let any Christian man, any real friend of humanity, carefully and continuously survey the actual condition of the human family, in its various phases of barbarism and civilization; in its aspects of happiness and suffering; in its social and political institutions; in its relations with labor, with capital, with commerce; let him consider the nature of the progress which he observes, and the tendencies which are at work; let him note all the hopes and promises which can be gathered from every form of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, and from every conceivable combination of them which human ingenuity can devise; and from every form of philosophy, and every project of reform; let him superadd, from the page of history, all that man has done for man in the most favorable circumstances; and finally, let him sum up that which is hopeful in human prospects, not forgetting that some of the most boasted human triumphs have been purchased by the direst human calamities, that the tendencies to evil do not lessen in proportion to the increase of intelligence, while the power of mischief enlarges; and he must be convinced that

there is no inherent virtue, no moral power, no good inclinations in man, adequate to such a social and political regeneration of society as appears to be attainable by a creature of his faculties and endowments. Such a survey must convince the observer that no such moral power exists, except in the influences of Christianity, to which he is forced to attribute the largest share of the actual progress made in human welfare since the Christian era. In this survey, the first great feature is, that, during the early ages of Christianity, its moral power to renovate human society and promote human happiness was plainly demonstrated to the world; the highest earthly hopes of man were placed within the reach of Christian effort. The early history of Christianity appeared to promise a bright day for the human family; but human depravity and perversity triumphed in that struggle; Christianity degenerated into Romanism, and the evening of that bright dawn ended in the long night of the Middle Ages. Thus the first experiment of Christianity, regarded as the only power adequate to secure the highest earthly happiness, failed signally in Papal hands. The Reformation was the era of another experiment, which has now been three centuries in progress. This time, the administration of Christianity is divided between Romanism, whose evil tendencies are as great as heretofore, and Protestantism, which has assumed a position of scarcely less power, and perhaps greater influence. Protestantism is now, and has, during its whole history, been regarded as the worthiest representative of Christianity. The purest individual Christian laments his insufficiency and utter unworthiness, and yet how far is such an one above the collective piety of Protestantism, split, as it is, into shapeless and countless fragments, hostile factions swelling with incessant intestinal broils and explosions. How imperfect a representation of the holy cause it impersonates. It presents a foundation of heaving, shifting sands, upon which to build the fabric of human welfare, rather than one "of rock which cannot be shaken." Must this experiment fail, and prove that Protestantism is also unequal to the task of applying Christianity to the earthly exigencies of humanity?



For anything that the collective power and influence of Protestantism is now doing to promote national welfare or social reform, it may be apprehended that, at no distant period, the Protestant administration of Christianity will be subjected, not to a deep night of ignorance—that is no longer possible—but to a long day of superlative intelligence, crime, and misery.

Christianity is a system of man's duty to God and to his fellow-men. It enjoins all that is included in love to God, and all that is included in kindness to men. Its administration is, however, committed to men, and partakes in its every manifestation of human infirmity. And while it offers much that is beautiful, it reveals more that is grievous and shocking. Christianity involves, wherever there is liberty of speech and action, a variety of opinions and interpretations, and consequently a variety of churches or sects, various organizations and forms of ecclesiastical government; also creeds, confessions, articles, liturgies, forms of worship, a ministry—divinely appointed, or religiously instituted; assemblies for worship, houses or churches in which to worship, and church architecture. Upon all these, and many more like things, there prevails, among even Protestant Christians, wide and apparently irreconcilable differences of opinion. These differences naturally magnify the objects to which they relate, in the minds of those who permit themselves to dwell upon them, and thus men's minds are seduced into merely collateral channels. Their whole time and their whole minds become absorbed in minor matters, while they suffer the substance to slip from their attention and sink from their sight. It is not necessary to weigh the exact value of these externals of Christianity, in their true place, and order, and use, but it is easy to say that they are of no use if abused or misapplied, and that they become a positive evil when they are substituted for Christianity itself, as is largely the case. None of these things, at the best, are to be received as Christianity, neither is it to be held responsible for any abuse of them. It is as high above all these externals as heaven is above the

earth. If our faith be too weak, and our energies insufficient to exemplify Christianity in our lives, we should not permit our conception to fall as low as our practice. We can never rise in our exemplification, if our conception be inadequate and unworthy. If men find it hard to act beyond the line of denominational boundaries, let not their faith suffer by assuming a narrower scope for Christianity itself than the most enlarged views their minds are capable of grasping. Its grandest aspect is that in which it not only offers eternal life and happiness to lost men, but wins their assent to the message of mercy by offering all that man can do and feel for man, as earnest of the authenticity and verity of the message. It is that in which, while it points to men the way to Heaven, smooths their path through this world to the utmost extent which human love and sympathy can go, thus furnishing the nearest approximation which can be made in this world, to the life of love in the world to come. It is a grand feature in Christianity, that its simple but comprehensive principles and injunctions involve the very elements of social life, the utmost duty of man to man. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," is a command which reaches to the whole compass of human duty; we owe to our neighbor not merely alms, when he is poor; we ought to save him from becoming poor. We owe him a better position in society; we owe him every social advantage—good laws, good institutions, a good government, a happy and prosperous country. What we owe to one we owe to all, and all in like manner owe to us. These obligations no human being can fulfil, under the requirements of the gospel, short of expending his whole energies and his whole opportunities. But the advantage of our neighbor is not to be found only in the bounds of his own country; it must be sought in the happiest relations of his own country with all the nations of the world; peace with all nations, and interchange of every good office with all. This vast scope of human duty involves necessarily the study of all the "themes" involved in so wide a compass of human action—it involves the consideration of all that concerns human welfare in this

world in connection with its highest destiny in the next world. While, therefore, nothing is omitted in the sphere of immediate duties, there should be no failure to follow out all obligations to their largest consequences, and to widen the range of duty to the utmost range of mental power; extending the range of action and influence in proportion as the field of vision is enlarged. Very many, it is well known, have no faith in moral or social progress; they regard all speculations in reference to social amelioration, as, at the best, mere visionary dreams, if not what is far worse, downright socialism. But let no friend of the human family be deterred from any research or inquiry, or speculation, looking to human advantage, by such narrowness of mind. Let him take the Gospels in his hand, and the light of all the other Scriptures, and he may go as far as his intelligence and knowledge of the world will carry him; and if he cannot secure the co-operation or approval of the Christian men of the present day, he will have the full sympathy of those who, having gone before, are observing the world from a point of view where nothing clouds their vision.

It is because the above, and such topics, in reference to the failures of Protestantism, have been pressed in the "New Themes," very imperfectly and inadequately, it is admitted, that the cry of "infidelity" has been raised against that book. It justifies no such charge; and the imputation is in itself in such bad taste that it is difficult to conceive how any gentleman, much less a Christian gentleman, could be guilty of making it. Dr. Chalmers remarked to Tholuck, "that some people have a very fine nose for heresy;" it appears that some of that sort are here also.

This kind of denunciation is the ugliest weapon that is left to the race which once wielded "fire and fagot." It may be, however, that no penalty is intended to be inflicted, in thus applying the term infidel; it is most resorted to by those who lack other arguments. It is a very prompt and very forcible method of refuting positions which the party is unable to meet in any other way. Such a charge, unjustly

made, must soon or late recoil upon him who makes it, and cannot fail seriously to injure the cause of Christianity, by betraying, in its name, a spirit so little in accordance with its nature and injunctions. If this charge of infidelity is justly applied to such positions as those in the "New Themes," for which the authority of the Word of God is constantly pleaded, in its letter or in its spirit, what is to be said of the manner in which the various Protestant denominations speak of and treat each other? Let the denominational press be examined; let the various sects be held up as they are painted by their rivals, and a picture will appear, before which the strongest representations of "New Themes" must grow pale. My pen recoiled from that task, which, if "all uncharitableness" is anywhere to be found, would expose it, in the mutual controversies and recriminations of professed Christians, in which the severest epithets and the most damaging accusations, are dealt out with lavish hands. But it is not merely to controversies in which the combatants are heated by collision that we must look in this connection. It is the settled doctrine of the Episcopal Church, that the clergy of all others, except the Romanists, are unauthorized intruders into the ministry of Christ; the Friends hold that the clergy are an unnecessary agency in Christianity; the Methodists receive neither the catechisms nor the confessions of the Calvinists; many denominations object stoutly to any créed, catechism, or confession; yet, for all this, however sharp the strife, it is not known to me that they have hurled at each other the terms "infidelity" and "infidels," in their warfare. These, perhaps, are mere family quarrels, in which latitude is allowed without damage; but woe to that stranger who shall assume to rebuke all together—who shall utter aloud that indignation which he might have vented with impunity in a denominational broil!

The "New Themes" was not designed, when written, for anything beyond a series of articles for a newspaper, or at most, a pamphlet. It was intended to appear as the production of a manufacturer or workingman, and to have some



signature with that indication. It grew beyond the limits contemplated; the actual form of publication was adopted without changing the text, though no one could be more sensible than the writer, of the deficiencies and imperfections of the work, and of its amenability to strict criticism in a variety of respects. My object would not, perhaps, have been any better attained by the severest revision to which it could have been subjected, though it might have been rendered a less precious morsel for the critic. The notes were increased to swell the size of the volume, after that form of publication had been adopted, and for the reasons which appear on their face.

The topics presented, were such as a long course of reflection had suggested as collateral to those which were specially under consideration, but of vital bearing upon them. This truth was forced upon me with a power not to be resisted, that the subjects of political and social reform could never be successfully elucidated until the light of the gospel was made to shine fully upon them, and that this light could not be made to shine upon them until the whole subject of the relations of Christianity with the earthly interests of humanity had undergone a more full and thorough exposition than had yet been given to the world. The text for this indispensable exposition is in the personal teachings and ministry of Christ, with innumerable confirmations and illustrations found in all parts of Holy Writ. Let no one suppose that any such exposition is extant, so long as there is no full development of the teachings of Christ, as they bear upon social and political duties; so long as there is no adequate work upon the doctrine and practice of Christian charity; so long as Christ's system of morality is not developed and applied to all that men think, and say, and do in the walks of every-day life.

This great subject, so full of interest, of such vast moment to the cause of humanity, and of such special concern to my own studies, it appeared to me not only right, but of unavoidable duty, to turn over to those to whom it justly belonged, though the step was out of my usual path, into a subject in which my incompetency was felt at every instant. It was

not an attempt, as seems to have been thought, to settle definitely the questions raised or touched; it was an exhortation to the Protestant clergy, to take up a wide range of themes, of vital consequence to the human family, but sadly neglected. In doing so, some liberty was given to impatience, and some freedom to speech. Feeling that it was far beyond my power to place these subjects where they ought to be, under the full light of the gospel, strong terms were employed to provoke the attention and consideration of those whose duty it was to accomplish the work. These "Themes" are not to be finally disposed of by criticizing or condemning the delivery of the speaker who suggests them. The speech may be very imperfect, and the speaker very awkward, but that lessens none of the responsibility which rests upon those whose duty it may be to perform the required labor.

THE CRITIC.—The Reviewer claims attention on the score of civility; it would be scarcely polite not to notice one who has bestowed so many attentions upon me.

The Review presents many points which suggest responses not very flattering to so complacent a personage as the Reviewer; but these may be left to other hands. Two only will be mentioned, as affording an opportunity to convey, whilst correcting the Reviewer, some useful information to others. When the Reviewer ventures into the subject of Pauperism, he reveals at once that the questions and controversies it involves are profoundly strange to him. So far as reference was made to England, the question was not as to the existence of the English Poor Laws; nor was it disputed that the English people had paid a larger amount under their system for the support of paupers than any other nation. The inquiry was into the political expediency and Christian character of that legislation for the poor, which, taken together, is called the English System. It is called by this name on the continent of Europe, and the term is generally employed by all who have engaged in the discussions upon population for the last half century.

It has not been thought necessary to burden these controversies or treatises with a recital of the English Poor Laws; it being taken for granted that intelligent persons, engaging in the subject, understood the import of the terms used to characterize the various systems. To designate the system of Mr. Malthus, the term Malthusian was used; and it would have appeared as absurd to recapitulate the positions of Malthus, when his system was referred to, as it would have been to recite the enactments of the English Poor Laws, instead of simply saying the English system of pauperism. The Reviewer exhibits the breadth of his knowledge by stepping into the discussion, book in hand, with the announcement that England has passed laws for the maintenance of the poor, and that her people have given liberally for that object: he points out the very statutes, recites the very words, and quotes, again and again, *Wade's British History*. There is something exquisitely innocent in this. There is clearly no affectation in the case; he considers these English statutes a discovery of his own, and they are produced to silence all these discussions about pauperism, and these complaints of the English system.

This discovery and application of the English Poor Laws, reminds me of an occurrence in a New England parish, in which, at a public meeting of the congregation, there was a warm debate upon the propriety of reading the Scriptures as a part of public worship; some alleging that they could read them at home, and others, strongly advocating the public reading. In the midst of the dispute, an honest "Layman" picked up an English copy of the Bible, in which the usual *imprimatur* met his eye, upon which he sprang in great excitement to his feet, exclaiming: "Here it is—here's a decision for you—here it is in the Bible itself: 'APPOINTED TO BE READ IN THE CHURCHES.'"

It may be worth while to inform the Reviewer that these English statutes were not unknown, even in this country, previous to the appearance of his publication. He will find large mention of them in the January number, 1841, of the

*Princeton Review*, and rather a full notice of the subject of English pauperism in that article, and another in the July number, 1841, of the same periodical. Both these articles were contributed by me, for the purpose of drawing the attention of the Christian public to the important topic of pauperism. It is no doubt unknown to the Reviewer that the statutes quoted by him so complacently, as a complete reply to the statements made by me, have been the subject of official comment in England. In 1834, a royal commission appointed "to make diligent and full inquiry into the practical operation of the laws for the relief of the poor in England and Wales, and into the manner in which those laws were administered," &c., made an elaborate report, in two good-sized octavo volumes, the matter of which is well calculated to enlighten the Reviewer on the subject of English pauperism. In the outset of this Report, which is subscribed by the Bishops of London and Chester, and seven other distinguished individuals, they review the English Poor Laws, including not a few statutes which escaped his notice, with somewhat greater knowledge of the subject than this Reviewer. They reach conclusions so different from his, that the fact is worth referring to as evidence that not only doctors, but reviewers differ. As a general conclusion of their Review, they state: "It is now our painful duty to report that, in the greater part of the districts, the fund which the 43d of Elizabeth [the basis, but certainly not the origin of our present system] directed to be employed in setting to work children and persons capable of labor, but using no daily trade, and in the necessary relief of the impotent, is applied to purposes opposed to the letter, and still more to the spirit of that law, and destructive to the morals of the most numerous class, and to the welfare of all." After speaking of the action of the magistracy in the administration of the Poor Laws, they conclude thus: "We have now given a brief outline of the most striking points in the present mal-administration of the laws for relief of the poor, and the principal causes to which we attribute it. We have endeavored to account for it by the



immediate gain which large classes have hoped to obtain, and in many cases have actually obtained from that mal-administration. Under the legal provisions in regard to settlement, it became the interest of every parish to apportion the fund for the subsistence of the laboring classes in such a manner as to give to all a subsistence, and, if possible, to none more than a subsistence; to treat them, in short, like slaves or cattle. Every one who endures the painful task of going through this Report, must be struck, and if the subject is new to him, astonished by the cases which we have cited," &c. The Report closes with a summary, of which the following words are a part:—

"We have now recommended to your Majesty the measures by which we hope that the ENORMOUS EVILS resulting from the present mal-administration of the Poor Laws may be gradually remedied. It will be observed, that the measures we have suggested are intended to produce rather negative than positive effects; rather to remove the *debasing influences to which a large portion of our laboring population* is now subject, than to afford new means of prosperity and virtue. We are perfectly aware that for the general diffusion of right principles and habits, we are to look, not so much to any economic arrangements, as to the influence of a moral and religious education."

As a result of this Report, the Act 4 and 5 William IV. was passed in 1834. This statute changed both the principle and administration of the Poor Laws. Under the old system, the *principle* was Public Charity; but the *administration* was an utter perversion of the principle, involving fraud in the managers of the fund, and an increase of pauperism, with an increase of misery on the part of the poor. The new principle was no relief but at the workhouse; and that to be made so irksome and repulsive, as to repel the poor from entering it, and drive them out, if possible, when in it. Families were separated, husband from wife, and both from children, with hard labor for all. This course assimilated the lot of the poor to that of criminals in our penitentiaries.

Under this repressive system, the expense of maintaining the poor was rapidly decreased for several years.

It was supposed that a great principle was discovered, and that a great saving in the support of the poor was effected. But the whole fabric broke down on the recurrence of a few years of scarcity. Money had been saved, but the people had suffered in proportion. This radical change in the English system commenced in 1834. It would be highly interesting to follow up the details of the experiment; but it must suffice to quote from two works of repute, one of which appeared in 1844, and the other in 1850. The first is the *Prize Essay on National Distress*, by S. Laing, Jr., for which £100 was awarded by a very able committee of five, of whom Sir David Brewster was chairman. When this *Essay* was published, the New Poor Law had been ten years in operation, and the commissioners had annually published an octavo volume, in the way of a report of their proceedings. Mr. Laing informs us that, "The researches of parliamentary commissions, as well as those of philanthropic societies and individuals, during the last few years, have accumulated a vast mass of evidence bearing on this all-important subject;" and from this he derives his information. "Where, then," he asks, "is the distress," if not seen in the outward financial or political state of the country? "How is it that so many serious men shake their heads with gloomy apprehension, and at times feel tempted to doubt whether the amount of evil in the present social condition of England does not preponderate over the good? *It is in the condition of the laboring classes that the danger lies.* The discovery of the fearful fact that as wealth increases, poverty increases in a faster ratio, and that in almost exact proportion to the advance of one portion of society in opulence, intelligence, and civilization, has been the retrogression of another and more numerous class towards misery, degradation, and barbarism." The evils involved in all this, he states thus: "1st. The existence of an intolerable mass of misery, including both recognized and official pauperism, and the unrecognized destitution that preys, like

a consuming ulcer, in the heart of our large cities and densely peopled manufacturing districts.

"2dly. The condition of a large proportion of the independent laboring class, who are unable to secure a tolerably comfortable and stable existence in return for their labor, and are approximating, there is too much reason to fear, towards the gulf of pauperism. It is almost too painful to pursue the hideous and revolting details of human misery and degradation which meet the inquirer at every step. It is difficult to speak of them with the calmness which impartial inquiry demands, and which is necessary to avoid the appearance of exaggeration. And yet it is an *imperative* duty; for the upper classes of society have only too long shut their eyes to the *realities* by which they are surrounded, and lived on in a dream of selfish pursuits and enjoyments, unconscious of the manner in which millions of human beings, fashioned in every respect as themselves, and distinguished from them only by the *accidents* of an artificial system of civilization, were living and dying around them. . . . The present situation of affairs in England presents, however, an amount of misery far too extensive to allow us to put it by with the comfortable solution, that it is the natural and inevitable retribution of the misconduct of those who suffer. In other times and countries, *vice* was generally the cause, and *misery* the effect; but with us the case is reversed. . . . If the causes which have operated for the last fifty years, and with increased force the last fifteen years, be allowed to operate unchecked, the great bulk of the laboring population of England will be reduced to a condition which leaves no alternative between a violent and bloody revolution, shattering the whole existing framework of society to pieces, or a permanent degradation of the population to a state of abject and heartbroken resignation—to misery which almost reduces the human being to a level with the brute." Thus writes a competent witness in 1844, who gives details and the authorities to justify the use of his strong expressions.

It may be well to inquire, in passing, what English divine

has shed the strong light of Christian obligation upon this condition of the laboring classes in England? What English divine has offered the true Christian solution of the difficulties of English Pauperism?

The second work referred to is one which appeared in London, in 1850, with the title *The Social Condition and Education of the People in England and Europe*, by Joseph Kay, of Trinity College, Cambridge. It is dedicated to Lord John Russel, then Prime Minister. It is in two elaborate volumes, which are well worth the examination of those who desire information on the subjects it embraces. His plan led him to inquire into the moral and physical condition of the poor in many countries, and contrast it with that of the poor in England: "I speak it with sorrow, and with shame, but with not less confidence in the assertion, that our peasantry are more ignorant, more demoralized, less capable of helping themselves, and more pauperized than those of any other country in Europe, if we except Russia, Turkey, South Italy, and some parts of the Austrian Empire. I speak this with deliberation." . . . "During the last half century, everything has been done to deprive the peasant of any interest in the preservation of public order; of any wish to maintain the existing constitution of society; of all hope of raising himself in the world; of all attachment to his country; of all feeling of any community of interest between himself and the higher ranks of society; and of all consciousness that he has anything to lose by political changes. The laborer has no longer any connection with the land he cultivates; he has no stake in the country; he has nothing to lose, nothing to defend. His position is one of hopeless and irremedial dependence. The workhouse stands near him, pointing out his dismal fate, if he falls one step lower." After furnishing a table of the public expenditures for the poor, from 1832 to 1848, showing an average of about twenty-five millions of dollars annually, he exclaims: "It surely cannot, and will not be contended that a laboring population which requires such an expenditure as this, and that too in addition to the vast



amount of charitable donations devoted annually to the same purpose, to keep part of it from actual starvation, can be in a very happy or prosperous condition? What country in the world is there in which such an expenditure is necessary to keep the laborers from starvation, or in which it is necessary to keep up such a Poor Law system, and for such a purpose? Why should not our peasants be at least as well able to depend on their own exertions for subsistence as the peasants of Germany, Switzerland, Italy, or France?" Mr. Kay speaks at length on the subject of the agency of the clergy, in reference to the case of the poor, and excuses them on the ground of their education, habits, and associations, from any active or useful visitation of the poor, among whom they are unfitted to be advisers, even when willing, because there is no mutual sympathy or knowledge between them. "Of the operatives in Lancashire, and of the workmen in our great towns, there is not one out of every ten who ever enters a church." One of these remarked, when spoken to on the subject: "Your church is a church for the rich, not for the poor; it was never intended for such people as we are." It has been found, as Mr. Kay shows at large, that since the Act of 1834, enforcing the workhouse system, has been fully put in operation, the poor have taken to vagrancy. In four years, ending 1848, the number of vagrants increased in a little over six hundred unions, or poor districts, from 1791 to upwards of 16,000. He introduces one hundred pages of details, the most shocking which can be conceived, of the condition and morals of the poor in England and Wales thus: "If any one should desire to see more of such sad and disgusting details as those collected in the following pages, I beg to refer him to the *Report on the Employment of Women in Agriculture*, in 1843; Mr. Chadwick's *Reports on the Sanitary Condition of the Laboring Population*; *Reports of the Welsh Commissioners*, and the *Poor Law Commissioners*; the columns of the *Times*; and the letters of Mr. Mayhew, in the *Morning Chronicle*." These one hundred pages of extracts, and other portions of Mr. Kay's first volume, abound in

authentic statements, showing the moral debasement and the physical destitution and suffering of the poor in England and Wales, which would be utterly impossible if Christianity controlled the measures devised for their relief.\* What light has the pure teaching of the Great Friend of the Poor been permitted to shed upon the policy which controls the earthly lot of the laborers of England?

The English people have contributed more money to the support of paupers, by many fold, than any other people. But what have English Christians done, in word or in deed, to save those neighbors, whom they are bound to love as themselves, from the pangs of pauperism? The solution of that question does not lie in almsgiving, nor in poor laws. It lies in the application of the commands of our Redeemer to the

\* Among the innumerable details furnished in the pages referred to are evidence of the precocious demoralization of females, and the promiscuous intercourse of the sexes, frequently without regard to the ties of blood. Child-murder for the sake of the burial-fees; descriptions of the dens inhabited by the poor in the cities, and of their hovels in the country; one-fifth of the people of Liverpool live in cellars, and a large proportion in dwellings no better. A committee appointed by the Statistical Society to examine the Parish of St. George's, which was selected as giving an average condition of the poor in London, report that 551 families, making 2025 persons, have only one room each, in which all live and sleep together; 562 families, 2454 persons, have only two rooms, in one of which different sexes undress and sleep; 705 families, 1950 persons, have only one bed, in which all sleep together; 728 families, 3455 persons, have only two beds each, in one of which the parents sleep, and in the other all the rest. The same Society sent a committee to examine Church Lane, in London, in 1848, who thus conclude their report: "Your committee have thus given a picture in detail of human wretchedness, filth, and brutal degradation, the chief features of which are a disgrace to a civilized country, and which your committee have reason to fear, from letters which have appeared in the public journals, is *but the type of the miserable condition of masses of the community, whether located in the small ill-ventilated rooms of manufacturing towns, or in many of the cottages of the agricultural peasantry.* In these wretched dwellings, all ages and all sexes—fathers and daughters, mothers and sons, grown-up brothers and sisters, stranger adult males and females, and swarms of children, the sick, the dying, and the dead—are herded together with a *proximity and mutual pressure* which brutes would resist; where it is physically impossible to preserve the ordinary decencies of life." With other details of criminality and destitution enough to startle the coldest and blindest Christian in Great Britain.—KAY, Vol. i. chap. ii.

business and exigencies of life. He who taught that the same wages were due to those who were hired at the eleventh hour, as to those who had borne the burden and heat of the day, has furnished a lesson which cannot be overlooked with impunity in defining what is due to those who have no living but their labor.

The great question of pauperism remains yet to be settled upon scriptural foundations. English statutes and experiments cast a vast and lurid light upon the subject; but the Bible must be buried, and the name and teachings of Christ forgotten, before it can be successfully contended that the lot of the poor and suffering is to be determined by the philosophy of such legislation, or the result of such experience.

It was said of Lord Brougham, when Lord Chancellor, by a caustic barrister, that if he only knew a little of Chancery Law, he would know a little of everything; and the recollection of the anecdote almost provokes me to say, that if the Reviewer, in this case, had known a little of English pauperism, he would have had at least one qualification for reviewing *New Themes*.

As the Review has been favorably received by some, it becomes matter of regret that, for want of knowing better, or a little reflection, such have chosen, instead of walking in the lofty ways of Christianity, to take for their leader one with whom, if they go far, they will find themselves moving in that low path where the blind, who are leaders of the blind, are prone to go.

It was an allegation in "New Themes," that there was no adequate work in the English language on CHRISTIAN CHARITY; that neither English nor American religious literature furnished such an exposition of the subject as its inherent importance, its position in the Holy Scriptures, and its proper rank in the scale of human duty demand. The Reviewer having evidently reserved his strength for this occasion, meets this assertion with the most crushing response, and the most unsparing denunciation, in the whole of his elaborate performance, and with a discrimination even more striking than that

displayed in reference to English pauperism. He furnishes a whole catalogue of works — ON THE LOVE OF GOD AND ON GOD'S LOVE FOR MAN! The Reviewer is, perhaps, so imbued with a knowledge of the ancient languages that he occasionally forgets his English; he knows that the word we translate charity, meant also in the original, love. He merely forgets that our word charity has an English meaning so well established that not even the Reviewer himself can shake it. Neither man's love of God, nor God's love for man, can be called charity, without violence to the English language. How one, apparently so well educated, could be guilty of such a mistake, seems inexplicable! Does the Reviewer call it AN ACT OF CHARITY IN GOD TO LOVE HIM?—and if he be willing thus to force his vocabulary, is he so irreverent as to go further, and say that it is AN ACT OF CHARITY IN HIM TO LOVE GOD?



NEW THEMES FOR THE PROTESTANT CLERGY: *Creeds without Charity, Theology without Humanity, and Protestantism without Christianity: With Notes on the Literature of Charity, Population, Pauperism, Political Economy, and Protestantism*: 12mo. pp. 383. Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo, & Co., 1851.

[The Publishers subjoin extracts from some of the notices of the Press to which this work has given rise, and also a few from letters of Clergymen referring to it. These extracts might be greatly extended, but the object is merely to give the tone of both favorable and unfavorable.]

FROM THE PHILADELPHIA CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE.

This volume touches the weak point of Protestant civilization, the relations between the rich and poor, between capital and labor. It discusses the great question which has convulsed Europe, and has given rise to the wild vagaries of Fourier, Louis Blanc, and Proudhon. The author, as is natural to an earnest mind, brooding morbidly over a great social evil, has adopted ultra views, and disparages strangely the achievements of Protestantism, and undervalues the worth of a dogmatic theology. He is unwittingly betrayed into statements which militate against the cardinal doctrines of the gospel.

Yet the book is in many respects a timely one. It exhibits in a strong and convincing light the *humanity* of the Christian religion, its essential philanthropy, and presents some charming pictures of Christian life and labor in the early ages of the church. No one can read it without being convinced that the Protestantism of England and America is sadly defective in Christian love and sympathy for the laboring classes. The church is no longer the almoner of charity to the poor and the suffering; personal duty is transferred to huge organizations, and the blessings attendant on true charity are lost both to the giver and receiver. The second table of the law needs a new exposition in our selfish, money-making age, and we welcome this volume as a harbinger of coming good. It is written with earnestness, intelligence, and candor, and ought to receive attention from thoughtful minds.

L.

## FROM THE PROTESTANT QUARTERLY REVIEW.

The volume before us comes with a title sufficiently striking to command earnest attention, and its contents deserve it. It is no common book. It deals with Protestant errors and omissions with honest fidelity, and though its rebukes are severe, they are the faithful wounds of a friend.

The writer of this volume wields a strong pen. He has been a keen observer, and he is a shrewd thinker. The book is eminently suggestive. The notes by the editor, offered in an Appendix, are in themselves a valuable addition to religious literature, and greatly enhance the worth of the book. The volume is one which is worthy of a place upon the table of every Protestant clergyman.

## FROM THE NEW YORK INDEPENDENT.

As the book is likely to awaken an unusual degree of interest, and is moreover highly suggestive, instead of simply noticing it under the head of the Editor's Table, we shall make it a text for occasional editorials upon the topics of which it treats.

We rejoice in the utterance of these just and liberal views from such a quarter, and hope that the candor of the author will not subject him to church discipline if ever his anonymous veil shall be removed. The great aim of the work is to exhibit the need of a more scriptural, practical, and preceptive preaching, than the author supposes to be common in Protestant churches, and of a more earnest and wide-spread application of the spirit of Christian love to the evils and the wants of society. The latter is a momentous problem for the Christians of this age of social progress and reform. We only broach it here, hoping to resume it hereafter.

We are glad that this anonymous writer has given such free and earnest utterance to his convictions on this subject; and that a publishing house of the highest respectability, and with the amplest facilities for diffusing its issues, has taken the responsibility of bringing these convictions before the public. We trust that the prominence we have thus given to it will lead our readers generally to procure the work, and will thus awaken in them a new interest in themes which may have become hackneyed by the discussions of this journal. The volume contains a valuable Appendix upon economical and social questions.

## FROM THE METHODIST PROTESTANT.

This is the title of a book well calculated to excite public attention—particularly among Christian readers. Our attention was first called to it by a newspaper paragraph, giving a brief extract from its pages,

which most favorably impressed us, and now, after having perused the volume with some care, we do not believe that we can better occupy our columns than by making it the subject of a few brief, editorial notes.

By many, this treatise will be regarded as furnishing evidence of a fault-finding spirit on the part of the writer, who, looking on the darker side of the picture presented by the present state of Christianity, has transferred the gloom of his own mind to the objects before him, and written out an exaggerated statement of church delinquencies. That some of his reflections may have the taint of a mind morbidly sensitive to existing evils in the church, we will not question; but the themes he discusses are vastly important, and although he does not claim to furnish a formal and complete treatise upon the topics embraced in the title-page, every candid reader that follows him will be impressed with the startling truths rising constantly before him, and will not hesitate to give his acquiescence to much of the severity with which the author deals with the errors he has set out to expose and condemn.

In the prosecution of his purpose, which is to call Protestant Christians to the consideration of what he supposes to have been too much overlooked by them, viz.: the *charity* of the gospel teachings, and of the apostolic injunctions, our author collates from the Evangelists and the epistles, all those passages which bear directly and specifically upon the practical operations of love to God and to *man*; and in these he finds ample cause of complaint against existing forms of Christianity, and, accordingly, lifts his voice manfully for a reformation. He shows that the concern of the Master for *the poor* finds no proper exemplification in the practice of his professed followers. That His mission was emphatically one of charity and mercy. That the Christian bond is love, not simply doctrine.

In his review of the Established Church of England; its abuses at the Reformation; its neglect of the poor and the suffering; the enormous revenues of the English bishops, which are a standing reproach to Christianity in a country where millions upon millions are groaning in poverty, with a clear right to all the relief these riches could afford; the shameful disregard of Christ's teaching, in English legislation with reference to pauperism, population, &c., our writer is most earnest and emphatic in his denunciations. The picture which he draws is startling in the extreme; but it startles because of its truth. "Lazarus is still lying at their gate; the wounded man in their streets is still bleeding; and the Priest and Levite pass by on the other side, whilst the good Samaritan delays his coming."

Passing from England to America, the writer looks upon the development of Christian charity here at home. Our limits forbid the comments we should like to make in connection with his rebuke to American Christians. But we cannot avoid quoting somewhat at large from

the volume at this point, and leaving the reader to ponder the truths here spoken, reserving what we may have farther to say on this volume to another issue of our paper.

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FROM THE METHODIST PROTESTANT.

We hope that our brethren in the ministry will procure and carefully read this book. Although there are many opinions advocated by the author in which we do not fully concur, yet taken as a whole, we are pleased with the book, and think its circulation will prove beneficial to the religious world. The main object of the writer is to induce Christians to attend to the practical duties of Christianity, and to imitate the example of their Saviour, who "went about doing good."

The author of the book now under review, and which furnished us a topic for editorial animadversion last week, presents this point in a very strong light. His book cannot fail to do good. He tells some homely truths; but he is not, therefore, "become the enemy" of the church. Harris, whom we have before quoted, has said, "That he who would sketch the most simple scheme of benevolence which the gospel can approve, will perceive at every step that he is writing the condemnation of the church." And the author now before us but reiterates and illustrates this declaration, when he declares:—

"The mission of Christ was not merely incarnation, death, resurrection, mediation, and redemption. It was also an humble and lowly ministration among the poor and suffering: this was his daily work. He went about doing good, ministering to the hungry, visiting the sick, and restoring the leprous, the blind, and lame. He preached constantly the doctrines of his mission, which, wherever felt and apprehended, will secure a ministry engaged in the very same work. Now, whether we look upon the whole mass of those who are regarded as Christ's ministers, or at those of any particular denomination, we shall be equally at a loss to find any class of them who are imitating the ministry of their Lord and Master. Not only is there no such class of ministers, but it is rare to find one who walks in the footsteps of Him whom he professes to serve; it is rare to find one who even comprehends the scope of his teaching who spoke as never man spake. The mass of these nominal ministers of Christ aim constantly to maintain a position of authority and influence, which they have usurped, and not only strive to perpetuate, but to enlarge."

This language is by no means complimentary; but our inquiry concerning it should be, *Is it not too true?* In uttering this truth, there is even, on the part of our author, less charge against individual character than against the spirit of the age, and the habits and machinery of the church. He looks upon it as but "a phase of the present state of Christianity."



It is as true in morals as in physics that "extremes vibrate opposites." Our author, in his zeal and earnestness for the *charity* of the gospel, it seems to us, places too light an estimate upon the actual good that the church is accomplishing, and seems at times to depreciate the importance of sound doctrine, and of solid learning, on the part of the clergy; the maintenance of a systematized disciplinary form of church recognition and government, and in fact the organized visibility of the body of Christ. On these points, however, he does not speak, except by implication. We therefore let them pass, and, without indorsing all that has been written, rejoice to find in his volume so much that recalls the simplicity, the purity, the unadulterated benevolence of the teachings of the Saviour of men.

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FROM THE EPISCOPAL RECORDER.

The author of this book has done a good work, and I only wish that his utterances had been stronger and less diffuse. He has gone (as it seems to me) a little too far, yet has evolved great truths, pregnant with beneficial changes. He has severely attacked almost all ecclesiastical organizations (not excepting the one to which he belongs), but in general they deserve what he has said of them.

Instead of characterizing his themes as *new*, I should say that he would revive old ones, those which Jesus and his apostles imposed. No thoughtful and candid man can peruse these pages without the conviction that the time must come, when Christians will do their work better and more effectively.

Now, while I do not give unqualified praise to all the author has said (far from this), I am still indebted to him for his interesting and instructive book, and heartily concur in general with the positions which he has assumed.

Those who adhere to mere technicalities, who are fond of dried specimens of theology; who would square everything, and accurately define what is above definition; who would plod on in an old-fashioned way simply because of its antiquity; who make God the author of a plan of salvation, or rather, of destruction, which is not found in the Bible, will not be pleased with what this book says. It gives their system a blow from which, it is to be hoped, it may never recover! It strikes a tender spot. It lays open festering wounds, slightly healed over. It tells wholesome and unwelcome truths. But, by honest, fearless, earnest minds, these truths will be appreciated, and they will lead such to think, to pray, and to act.

And while I would suggest that nothing is gained by undue severity upon those we would reform, who will not bid the author God-speed in his noble work, and thank him most heartily for what he has done to awaken a slumbering church, to open half-closed eyes, and to arouse men to thought and action?

C.

FROM THE CHRISTIAN OBSERVER. (PRESBYTERIAN.)

An eloquent work on an important theme. It portrays the great defect in the religion of Protestant Christendom. It sheds the light of Heaven on the great barrier that has hindered and still hinders the progress of true Christianity. It contrasts the formal and technical religion of the ministry and different churches with the pure, holy, self-denying, and loving religion, illustrated in the preaching, life, and works of Jesus Christ and his apostles, and exposes the glaring omissions of the Christianity of our times. The truths presented as "*new themes*"—like other things called "new" or "new school"—are as old as the gospel, and are worthy of the attention of all who are endeavoring to promote the kingdom of Christ.

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✓FROM THE EVANGELICAL CATHOLIC, NEW YORK. (EPISCOPAL.)

We do not know the name either of the author or editor of this work. An acute criticism could, with very little trouble, point out literary defects, as regards scholarship, style, and, in some places, depth. Traditional orthodoxy again and again feels itself indignant at his bold censures of, and strictures upon, the existing order of things, though we should do the author gross injustice if we wished to convey the impression that he is either an heretic or an unbeliever.

Thoroughly Protestant in his modes of thought, accepting in the gross Protestant orthodoxy as accurate, he complains that it is but a skeleton of sound propositions to which Protestantism is devoted. It lacks charity; it lacks humanity; and is thus dead to the true spirit of Christianity. Such is his charge. He contends that the divine mission of the gospel fails in our hands. Instead of seeking the poor, the sorrowing, or the outcast, the depraved, and the abandoned, he declares that Protestantism contents itself with teaching the dry husks of theology—with drilling the understanding into acquiescence with certain accredited formulas—with pronouncing orations on Sundays to respectable, well-behaved persons, who listen seated in their cushioned pews. He may exaggerate the evils around us in this particular. But this is a subject which requires strong statement. We are so secure, so well satisfied, that nothing but the image of a gigantic sin can startle us from our propriety. It is a protest against the Pharisaism of the day; against its heartless formalism, against its frigid theology, which this man is here uttering. We are very unwillingly prevented from further observations upon his production at present.

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FROM THE CLARKSVILLE CHRONICLE.

It is not often that a book is presented to the public so replete with common sense and home-truths, and set forth with so much force. We

know not the author's name, but, were his book generally read, he might congratulate himself upon being the instrument of much good. In this age of time-serving policy, it is refreshing to find one with the independence to attack error wherever found, and the ability to expose it fully. Its perusal will repay, many fold, the price of the book.

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FROM THE VIRGINIAN HERALD, FREDERICKSBURG.

This work should not only be in the hands of the ministry, but also in the library of every Christian and thinker. The work is somewhat novel in character, and speaks forth truths which must be regarded as lamentable, yet true. The great point of inquiry is, whether the church of the present day is a counterpart of what it was in the days of Luther, and whether Christians—pastors and people—are doing their duty? The author thinks not; and urges strong reasons, plain and simple to the comprehension, wherein the Christian church falls short of its duty.

The author goes on to say:—

“While one portion of nominal Christians have busied themselves with forms and ceremonies, and observances; with pictures, images, and processions; others have given to doctrines the supremacy, and have busied themselves in laying down the lines by which to enforce human belief—lines of interpretation, by which to control human opinion—lines of discipline and restraint, by which to bring human minds to uniformity of faith and action. They have formed creeds and catechisms; they have spread themselves over the whole field of the sacred writings, and scratched up all the surface; they have gathered all the straws, and turned over all the pebbles, and detected the color, and determined the outline of every stone, and tree, and shrub; they have dwelt with rapture upon all that was beautiful and sublime; but they have trampled over mines of golden wisdom, of surpassing richness and depth, almost without a thought, and almost without an effort to fathom these priceless treasures, much less to take possession of them.”

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FROM THE CINCINNATI HERALD.

This work, though published anonymously, is understood to be from the pen of an old school layman in Philadelphia. It is written in an earnest and vigorous style, and without much conciseness or system. Though severe, it seems well-meant, and is designed to call the attention of the Protestant churches to the importance of removing the temporal wants and evils which men suffer; and, while it cannot be recommended as an unexceptionable manual on this subject, it contains facts and thoughts of importance, deserving to be deeply considered by Protestants. We could wish it widely read, for it would stir up many Christian minds on points where our systems of benevolent effort would bear great improvement.

The first impression naturally is, that the book is either from the pen of a strongly-biased sectarian or an infidel. But such is not the case. The writer, whoever he may be, has performed his task of showing to the reformed churches their strong tendency to put faith above charity, and doctrine above life; in no captious or sneering spirit, but with an earnestness, yet thoroughness, which bears conviction to the mind. "Better are the stripes of a friend than the kisses of an enemy." With this feeling, rather than in a spirit of offended pride, should the volume be read by those to whom it is addressed. It is not the work of either an open or disguised enemy; but, clearly, of one who is a friend to Christianity, and seeks to do it a service by pointing out to its professed friends the errors and defects that are destroying the very life of religion.

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The unknown author of this American work takes for his themes (to use his own language) "Creeds without Charity, Theology without Humanity, and Protestantism without Christianity." He insists that Protestants have long overlooked and neglected charity; that it has not been, and is not, a feature in their creeds; that, while Protestantism has gone far before the world in liberality, it is almost a stranger to that charity which the author of our faith preached and exemplified. He regards charity as the great lever of Christianity, the faithful application of which will remove the most serious obstacles to the conversion of the world. The book is written with vigor and terseness; is thoroughly imbued with an earnest liberal spirit, and sets forth the practical duties of religion with great force and impressiveness. The application of Christianity to human affairs—or rather its humanitarian operation, is a subject which is gaining upon the attention of thoughtful men all over the world; and this work deserves an honorable place among the literature which the topic is so abundantly calling forth.

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FROM THE FAMILY FRIEND.

The author states that it is his purpose in this book "to insist that the doctrine of Christian charity is not sufficiently prominent, if it be not wholly omitted, in Protestants' standards, creeds, confessions, catechisms, and articles; that it does not hold the place due to its importance in Protestant theology and literature; that the moral law—the rule of Christian life and conduct—can be more safely drawn from the very words of Christ than from any uninspired development of the Decalogue." It must be admitted that there is much truth in these positions; and that our clergy of late have seemed rather to prefer metaphysical discussions, and occasionally angry controversies, to studying and acting on that new commandment which our Saviour himself inculcated—the law of charity and love. Those who read this volume in the right spirit will find much to profit by; we trust it may be instru-



mental in removing from certain members of more than one evangelical priesthood, that exclusiveness and self-glorification so unworthy of themselves, and so offensive to their brethren.

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FROM NORTON'S LITERARY GAZETTE.

A book with a striking title, and one that will furnish material for much thought to every Christian. It is on the general subject of the duties owed by Christians to the poor. The views advanced, the mode of discussion, the spirit manifested, the conclusions drawn, are not all we could wish. This, however, is a matter of little consequence, as the object of the author is not so much to dogmatize, as to invite the Protestant clergy to look at a great subject, which has been too much neglected by them. If he accomplishes this, if they are led to investigate for themselves independently, his object is secured. He would simply start them on the trail.

The subject may be stated to be the amelioration of the condition of the poor. It is not denied that the Christian religion has done a vast deal for this class of the community in all ages of the church; that it is doing much now; neither is it denied that there is a willingness among those who have been brought under its power, to do vastly more than has ever yet been done. But it is a fact, which no one will dispute, that Christians are not doing a hundredth part of what they might easily do, and ought to be doing. The question is, how is the condition of the poor to be improved? Is it necessary to civilization that there should always be a great class of such ignorant and degraded poor as fill the cities of Europe and our own land? There are millions on the two continents, whose lives are little better than a "brute dragging at the wheels of care." Other millions still, somewhat better off, perhaps, are suffering from the combined effects of priestly cunning, and political ambition and misrule. They are denied their proper position in the scale of humanity. They are not permitted to make their industry available to their own benefit, as justice requires. There has been no hand stretched forth to help them. They see no prospect of relief coming from those who are superior in social position. They deem themselves injured, and are groping for the means of improvement. They are forced to begin to think for themselves.

We hope the Protestant clergy will study this book, and particularly the "notes," added by the editor. They fill a hundred closely-printed pages, and are altogether the most valuable part of the work. They furnish valuable material for thought, and point out the sources where information may be obtained. They are written with a better spirit, and by a more masterly hand.

FROM THE SATURDAY POST.

This book is intended and calculated to stir the spirit of the thoughtful reader. It begins with the query, "What impedes the progress of Christianity?" and, in the style of a man who has thought out the subject independently, proceeds to expose what he believes to be the comparative failure of the Christian church to accomplish the mission of Christ, and institutes a direct and searching investigation of the causes of this failure. Without pretending to indorse all the writer's views, we must say that the volume contains more home-truths—of a somewhat unpalatable nature, perhaps, to many high-professors and low-practisers—than we have seen for a long time. We are informed that the author is a merchant of high standing and character, and an esteemed member of the (we believe) Presbyterian Church.

FROM THE NEW YORK OBSERVER.

Seldom have we read a volume with so much truth and so much error in it; so much good and evil, and in such fair proportions; a book so much and so little to our mind, as the one now before us. The writer has not chosen a distinctive title for his work: but he condenses his subject into these heads: "Creeds without Charity, Theology without Humanity, and Protestantism without Christianity."

He meant well, we doubt not; and he has given utterance to some strong, wholesome, and much-needed truths. The church needs many of the reproofs here administered; it ought to heed the appeals here made. The clergy would be more useful if they fully carried out all the injunctions of this book and of the Bible. Society would be vastly improved in all its aspects and relations, if the gospel of Jesus Christ were made the rule of practice in all classes and conditions of men. No doubt of it. And none have so often, so loudly, faithfully, and eloquently proclaimed this doctrine as the clergy of these United States.

What fault, then, do we find with the book? Just this: that the writer has mistaken the facts on which he builds his beautiful structure. He has brought a false charge against Protestantism, against the church, against the clergy, against the age we live in. He has either lived in a cloister, and been ignorant of the movements of the times, or he has not sympathized with the true humanity of conservative Christianity. He is a bigoted advocate of charity; an intolerant preacher of toleration. While he admits that Romanism is persecuting, ignorant, diseased, and deadly, he charges that Protestantism is destitute of CHARITY; and this idea is *the* one idea of the whole book: a spectre that haunts the disordered brain of the good man, who perpetrates a whole volume to show the grand necessity of charity, which he thinks to be utterly wanting among the Christians of our day. He

pleads for the poor, the ignorant, the orphan, the sick, for suffering humanity everywhere, and thinks, if the precepts of Christ were felt by the clergy and the church, that the reign of universal happiness would be hastened. We think that the author has overlooked the great fact that all real reform has been the fruit of the gospel under the preaching of the very men whom he regards as so very inefficient; that there is far more real charity among Protestant Christians than any other people on earth; that the only efforts that are made to make men happier in this world, are the result of Protestant teaching and example; while we deny altogether that the practice of virtue by those who have not the *principle*, tends to cultivate the grace of charity in the soul.

But, when we have said these things by way of exception, we will go on to say that the book is one for all Christians, and especially Christian ministers, to read. The facts in history are of great value. The suggestions of evils are timely. There are lessons of vast practical moment to all thinking men; and, if they are here taught with a tone of severity and a frowning brow, instead of a smile, they are not the less valuable; and a wise man will learn even of an ungracious teacher. "Charity is the great lever of Christianity," says our author. "By it the messengers of the gospel can open the eyes of Pagan blindness; by it the ears of the most obstinate and hardened can be unstopped; by it reason can be restored, and life saved; by it every human ill can be alleviated; by it all obstacles to the progress of Christianity can be removed or diminished." Granted; and, therefore, we plead that the book, with all its defects, may be read as an earnest plea for a grace that an apostle pronounced to be greater than faith or hope. We shall be very apt to take it up again, and make it a theme for further remarks. As the author desires the pulpit to discuss it, the press, of course, is equally free.

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FROM THE PRESBYTERIAN.

The volume before us is written with no ordinary vigor, and with an earnestness we should commend, were it not for the dangerous tendency of some of the views it is employed to enforce. The writer is at once intelligent and blindfolded—right in some of his statements, and dangerously wrong in others. It starts with the proposition that the essence of all Christ's teachings is charity and brotherly kindness; and getting his mind fully absorbed in this theme, he, in no measured tones, inveighs against the church as absolutely neglectful, if not regardless of this great feature of Christianity. This is news to us, and it would be news to any one daily conversant with Christian men and Christian operations. We are painfully aware that charity, in its best sense, is not sufficiently cultivated, nor as prominent as it should be; but it is a slander on Protestantism to represent it as scarcely tinged with this

virtue. Assuming this ill-founded position, the writer proceeds to state what he deems to be the causes of the seeming defect, and these he finds mainly to consist in substituting theology in the place of practical virtue. Hence he berates creeds, catechisms, sectarian partialities, church order and discipline, and, of course, does not spare the clergy. Here he displays a want of discrimination, if not a deficiency of the charity he commends. It is no small assumption in him to claim a knowledge of the true spirit of the gospel, which is hidden from all other eyes, except it be the eyes of a jealous and hostile world, in behalf of whose discrimination he makes an exception. If the writer means anything, it is that the doctrines of religion, and all outward church forms and arrangements should give place, that charity might have its perfect work. He should have known, before he undertook to instruct the church in its duty, that God has revealed the doctrines of the Bible; that he has made faith in them essential, and that charity dies out just in proportion as these doctrines are discarded or loosely entertained. Men who have no practical godliness may abuse an orthodox creed by professing to embrace it; but those who embrace it in sincerity, cannot neglect the practical duties of Christianity. The author views his whole subject through a jaundiced medium, and although his intentions may have been to direct men to a more earnest attention to practical Christian virtues, he has adopted a most unwarrantable method of doing it, and has written a book which will be read with more zest by unbelievers than believers, and has thus really aided the cause of infidelity.

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FROM THE INDEPENDENT, OCT. 19, 1852.

It is not half so important to find out whether this author is a disguised Jesuit, an infidel, a Fourierite, a Unitarian, or a Calvinist, as it is that each class referred to should ask whether his strictures are true.

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FROM AN EMINENT CLERGYMAN OF THE BAPTIST DENOMINATION.

In my view, it presents to Christians a vast amount of truth of an importance such as cannot well be estimated. I wish it great success.

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FROM A PRESBYTERIAN CLERGYMAN.

I am inclined to the opinion, that the discussion which such a book as this must excite must eventuate in helping on a most desirable reformation.



FROM A PRESBYTERIAN CLERGYMAN.

You ask my "views" of the book, "New Themes for the Protestant Clergy," which you presented to me. With this request I cheerfully comply, understanding you to mean simply my impressions as to the general merits of the publication, and not detailed remark upon its specialities. And allow me to say, that I read the work with great pleasure, and I hope with profit. A very important subject is discussed in a style pure and lucid; the facts introduced under various divisions show research, and are truly instructive. I was specially impressed with the copious array of divine truth concentrated upon the subject of charity, and arose from its perusal with a heart more deeply touched with sympathy for suffering humanity.

The errors of the ministry, and their consequent dereliction in duty, elicit a due proportion of remark; but instead of repelling the force of truth, I trust I honestly inquired, "Lord is it I?"

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FROM A PRESBYTERIAN CLERGYMAN.

It is written in a very lively and attractive style, and contains much with which I agree, and would gladly see carried out in practical exemplification. Its portraiture of actual religion is too truthful to be agreeable or to be easily denied.

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The object of this little work is to expose the error of the church in its exaltation of theology and its neglect of humanity. According to the author, the cardinal doctrines of Christianity are the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. This thesis he maintains in opposition to all forms of sectarianism. He argues with clearness, force, knowledge, and a good temper. He takes his stand on the Bible, and is powerful and happy in his appeals to its authority. The work has no important defect except its want of adaptation to the public mind in the present state of public opinion. With a highly favorable impression of the talents, learning, Christian spirit, and benevolent intention of the author, I believe that his book is calculated to do good. Yet by a large number it may be deemed unsound and harmful.

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FROM A PRESBYTERIAN CLERGYMAN.

I read it with great interest; and if I could hope that God would give his ministers and people grace to bear the severe rebukes it administers, and profit by the searching inquisition which it institutes into the failures and faults of the prevailing type of Protestant Christianity, I should have higher hopes for religion and humanity than my knowledge of men, even good, well-meaning men, permits me to indulge. I fear very much that he pays a compliment to our ministers and churches,

in presuming on their kind acceptance of such plain-dealing, which the result will show we do not deserve. I shall be very agreeably disappointed, if the little volume does not encounter a storm of hostility, if not of abuse.

Viewing the subject from his stand-point, I have very little fault to find with it. I regard it as a very solemn, and impressive, and commanding *exposé* of a subject which I deliberately regard as the great subject of this age. There is no one thing which I regard as of more importance, than that the attention and heart of the church should be turned to the amazingly important practical question which we in our generation are charged, in the providence of God, to carry to a Christian solution. The world has been heretofore engaged in laying the foundation, and in quarrying and hewing the stones of the great temple of human redemption and enfranchisement; and now the times are upon us when the structure is to be reared, and Jesus Christ must be the chief Corner-Stone. It is to be deplored, in the last degree, that the church and the ministry of true religion should be alienated for an hour, or even that they should fail to see adequately the true nature and grounds of the movement into which they are to be inevitably precipitated. If he had written for anybody but the ministry, I should feel wholly incompetent to decide in any particular; but with my knowledge of the principles, views, and feelings in which the ministry of our church and our age are educated—the *idola fori* of Bacon—the professional prejudices of the class, if you please, I could most earnestly wish that some degree of accommodation, if nothing more, had characterized the plan and discussions of the book. I think he has pushed his statements to an extreme, just on that side which will be most likely to offend. The book bears some appearance, in consequence, of being an assault upon the spirit and position of the clergy. It strikes me as extravagant in its depreciation of theology, and generally of the *teaching* function of the church. It overlooks the fact that truth is in order to holiness; that Christianity is not only a life of philanthropy, but of charity, springing from and instinct with the great *truths* of the incarnation, the atonement, and the kingly office of the Lord Jesus Christ. The tenor of the life of Christ is represented too exclusively under the aspects of his humanity and beneficence, and too little under the fundamental facts to which the miracles of mercy were in one sense only tributary, and without which they would have been unmeaning and valueless as a redemption for humanity. He makes far too little of his character and office, as a teacher sent from God, to show unto us the way of life and holiness, as compared with the mere philanthropy of his spirit, and life, and religion. The one, he might have exalted never so highly, if he had not seemed to depreciate unduly the other. He need not have brought these truths prominently forward; but there

are so many disparaging things said of teaching the doctrines of the gospel, as if they were worthless, or stood in the way of its humane mission to man, that it rouses at once the hostility of those whom it seeks to benefit.

I cannot help thinking, that while there is great and solemn truth in what is said of the failures of Christianity on the one hand, as compared with what it might and should have accomplished, and of the advantages likely to accrue on the other, from baptizing the ministry into the spirit of New Testament charity, yet both these forms of statement show a tendency to exaggeration which may be turned to bad account. The obstacles which a pure Christianity encounters in the heart of fallen humanity, as exemplified in the life and ministry of Christ himself, are, I think, too much ignored in stating the history of its progress in the church and the world.

In looking back over what I have written in great haste, I see it takes a shade of coloring which I did not intend to impart to it. I meant to state this matter in a way that would prepare the author to expect no very cordial reception from some quarters where he would be likely to look for countenance, sympathy, and support. I did not intend what I have said to be the expression of my own views and feelings, with reference to what I suppose to be the *real object and scope* of the book. It is my substantial agreement with the views it presents, and my personal knowledge of his aims and spirit in presenting them, that make me anxious for its reception. If it should turn out differently from my fears, I shall rejoice most heartily. What I have mentioned as an objection to the book, though I think intrinsically valid, would be a *bagatelle* in my view, but for my fears that it may unnecessarily hinder the accomplishment of ends which I look upon as so amazingly important. My whole heart is with him and with the book, so far as it is a fair and true expression of his real views. I regret what strikes me as faulty, in the way of exaggeration and unguarded statement, and, perhaps, misapprehension, in regard to the actual spirit and achievements of Protestant Christianity, because I do think the view he meant to present is one of vast and solemn moment to the world, both in and out of the church. I can truly say that I think the book has done me good as a Christian and a Protestant; and I can conscientiously hope and pray that it may produce the same effect upon the active working ministry of this land, in all its great evangelical denominations.

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FROM THE CHURCH REVIEW, AND ECCLESIASTICAL REGISTER.

### THE CHURCH AND THE TIMES.

There are two classes of persons who will shrink with sacred horror from the title of this book: both the *formalist*, and the *formulist* will



abjure it without further scrutiny. The one believes that the church is to truth what amber is to the insect; which it incloses, holds fast, preserves entire, *but first kills*. The latter imagines, that, from apostolic times, the truth was held by the church in a state of solution; until a certain modern date, when, on a sudden shaking of the vessel, that truth was instantly deposited in the form of a transparent, cold, angular, and sharp-pointed crystal, which henceforth can neither be improved nor modified.

The theory of the author under review may be thus stated: In apostolic times, it was the motto of the church: "Now abideth these three, faith, hope, and charity; but the greatest of these is charity;" in these latter days the text is virtually altered so as to read, "the greatest of these is *faith*."

Another inquiry is beginning to arrest attention: what relation does Christianity sustain to the social questions and leading movements of the age?

At this point in our investigation, we hear the prompt response from many a comfortable parsonage and from innumerable stately Christian residences, "Christianity in its organic form has nothing to do with such matters. It is the peculiar and exclusive prerogative of the clergy to prepare men for another world; they have but one message to deliver, and but one work to perform. The safety of the church depends upon her keeping aloof from the excitements of the day."

Are Christians aware of what must be the inevitable result of all this? Is the church in a condition to counteract the danger? There they are, shooting swiftly about in every direction—those piratical crafts, with their sharp bows and raking masts, showing no ensign at the peak till the battle is fairly begun—and where is the church? Here she is snug in harbor, like a huge frigate laid up in ordinary, with her topmasts down, her sails nicely stowed away, the deck boarded over to keep out the weather, anchored at the stem and stern; and here, if some people had their way, she would lie till she rots.

We do not mean to intimate that there is any general desire amongst us to keep the good old ship always in port; but we do say, most unequivocally, that the aggressive activity of the church is not expended to the most profitable purpose. We are constantly re-arguing questions, which argument can never settle. We are organizing on opposite sides to repress tendencies in the church which have always existed, and always will exist until all minds shall be cast in the same mould, and so made to think, and reason, and feel alike. Meanwhile, as our divided forces stand in hostile array on either side of the stream, hurling reproaches at each other, society is drifting away from us. Positive error in the church is certainly to be resisted, and that perhaps more vigorously than the heresy that lies without; but it is possible, that, be-



fore long, a foreign invasion may lead us to feel that the points in debate within our borders are not so fundamental as we had supposed.

Perhaps the most important practical question now before us is this: How has Protestant Christianity fulfilled its mission in respect of the lower strata of society? With what degree of faithfulness and effectiveness has it preached the gospel to the poor? How far has it operated for the elevation, physical, intellectual, and moral of the unfortunate multitudes who are born to an inheritance of suffering and poverty? *How do the statistics of pauperism in the present century compare with the records of former generations?*

It is, however, useless to deny that our most enlightened forms of Christianity have shamefully failed in respect of that duty which the blessed Saviour made most prominent in his earthly mission. There are certain points which one would infer from the life and teachings of Christ, were intended to stand in the very fore-front of his religion, that we have quietly placed almost out of sight. They are embodied in the text from which he preached his first sermon in the little synagogue of Nazareth; a text which has never yet been embodied in any formal creed of Christendom. The spirit of *caste* is as rife in Christian Europe and America as it ever was in pagan Greece or Rome. The disciples of the Nazarene are distributed and classified in the arrangements of public worship with painful exactness, according to their position in society; and in many of our churches, an apostle who should enter the door anonymously would traverse the aisles a long while before he would be invited to a seat; and if he were disposed to purchase a pew, he would find that the price consumed more than he could earn by many months of fishing. It is not to be expected that all distinctions of rank can be annihilated, even in the church; there are some laws of social intercourse which separate the lower from the higher classes, and which subserve the comfort of the former as much as they do the taste of the latter; and it would distress both parties alike if these rules and customs should be altogether dispensed with, even in the Christian society. But the gulf which now separates them is certainly wider and more impassable than it need be; and it ought to be rendered in some way a *possible thing* for the poor to worship, if they please, in our "stateliest temples." This they cannot do at present.

Neither is it right that the church should stand passively by, and look with either disdain or with fear upon the movements now in agitation for the elevation of the lower class of laborers, and for the rescue of those who lie lower still, from the miseries of pauperism. To shriek with horror at the enormities of socialism is not "the whole duty of man." To tremble at the growing power of "Trades Unions," is not the most dignified attitude for a Christian. The church has a work to do down in those lower regions where these movements originate, which

thus far has been rarely noticed in her convention debates, and never in her legislation. *The most imperative work now incumbent on the church lies in that direction.* We say this deliberately and unqualifiedly. These "dangerous movements" among the people are not to be rudely repressed, and they cannot be summarily arrested. They originate in a stern agony of want, sometimes in a hopeless despair, which Christians must relieve, or take the consequences. It will not do for the well-fed and prosperous disciple to say: "Those poor wretches have the same opportunity to rise in the world that any of us have; I was poor once, and I am now rich;" there are tens of thousands, even in our own community, who can no more rise from their degradation without some new action in the social state than they could understand our "popular preachers" without an interpreter. They must be helped to their feet, or they can never stand upright. The *causes* of pauperism, of crime, and of atheistic convulsions must be explored. The probable effects of the increasing inequality in the distribution of wealth must be carefully investigated.

A very alarming circumstance in our present condition is the fact, that most of the movements now in agitation for reform amongst the laboring population are allied with infidelity. Is this attributable to our having settled down upon such a theory of human depravity, that we are driven to preach to the people the utter hopelessness of general reform, and inculcate the doctrine as a part of Christianity, that "revolutions, great discoveries, augmented science, and new forms of policy shall become in effect what may be denominated the sublime mechanics of depravity?" If this be the principle upon which we act, if we determine to relinquish "the amelioration of humanity," and the regulation of the present world into the hands of infidels, it requires no very acute vision to see where the church will be found half a century hence. She must identify herself with the masses of the people if she would save either them or herself. The *life* of Christ must be reproduced in her members, as well as the doctrine of Christ in her creeds.

The *Reformation* is not complete. It has, in certain respects, stopped midway. It struck one great blow for the liberation of the soul; but, as a distinct movement, its strength is wellnigh expended. It is only in the Anglican communion, that the original principles of the Reformation retain their vitality. Other Protestant bodies have their forms of life, but they are of a more recent date. The time has come for the organization of a new movement. The *practical* element of Christianity must be developed anew. There are symptoms of such a movement in various quarters of the church, which we hail with joy. A species of benevolent effort has been commenced in some of our larger cities, which will do more to recommend and extend the church than all the arguments that were ever written. A new party in the church is

struggling into existence, which will refuse to be called a party in any exclusive sense. There are already many amongst us, who are ashamed of the old Shibboleths.

In a future number, we shall endeavor to give an impartial sketch of the present attitude of the church with reference to this party question, and to the new amalgamation which is inevitable. There are matters of the most vital interest bearing upon the *adaptation* of the church to the necessities of the times which are now fairly up; and they cannot be disposed of without careful and impartial consideration. If we shall succeed in exciting any further interest in these topics, whether it be developed in the shape of opposition or the contrary, our main purpose will be accomplished.







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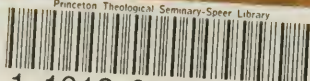
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